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DRESSED TO THRILL

Jane Shilling has a crash course on rock style at the Brit Awards, P17

'Wise men' would be abolished

Brown plans independence for the Bank

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

GORDON BROWN will today announce the first steps a Labour government would take towards creating an independent Bank of England.

He intends to change the personalised links between the Governor and Chancellor that created the so-called Ken and Eddie show, and to scrap the independent panel of "wise men and women".

Instead, he wants to set up two new bodies to give him a much broader range of advice: a monetary policy committee, chaired by the Governor, which would formulate the Bank's advice, and a council of economic advisers to work with the Treasury.

The reforms are seen as an essential prelude to changes that could lead to an independent Bank that sets interest rates to meet inflation targets laid down by the government. But it is clear that the Bank would be on trial in the early Labour years. A source close to the Shadow Chancellor said: "We will not consider moving forward towards independence until these reforms are in place and the Bank has established a good track record of advice. This is Lab-

Blair's plans for No 10 top team

If Labour wins the election, Tony Blair wants to ensure that his office will be in control of the government machine. The key to his success would be a No 10 team to keep a check on Whitehall departments. Page 6

Leading article, page 19

our dipping its toe in the water of independence, but these reforms are needed quickly to stabilise the position between the Bank and the Chancellor."

Mr Brown is understood to have agreed the new monetary policy committee in private talks with senior Bank officials. It would comprise the Governor and his deputy, two executive directors responsible for monetary policy and three or four acknowledged experts from outside, who would become full-time Bank employees on three or four-year contracts. "Both the Governor and I will be committed to ensuring these appointments are made on the basis of reputation and expertise," Mr Brown will say.

He will also attack the

personalising of the relationship between Kenneth Clarke and Eddie George as being deeply damaging. "The fact that the making of monetary policy has descended into a running dispute between the Chancellor and the Bank of England, often conducted through the media, is one reason why we have not achieved sufficient credibility and are now paying the price of higher long-term interest rates and lower investment."

Mr Brown will go on to accuse Conservatives of misusing the panel of independent forecasters known as the "wise men and women" and say that the idea has run its course. Instead, Labour would set up a council reflecting a much wider range of expertise to advise the Chancellor on monetary policy and other matters in which the Treasury has a direct interest.

Today's speech will emphasise throughout Labour's commitment to low inflation, and Mr Brown will promise to match the Government's target of 2.5 per cent.

But Mr Clarke yesterday claimed that there was a £2 billion "black hole" in Labour's spending calculations that would mean higher taxation and borrowing. The Chancellor said that Labour's promises were incredible because Mr Brown had not committed himself to some of the Conservatives' revenue-raising measures and had overestimated other income.

Opposition to the privatisation programme would deprive a Labour government of £1.5 billion, and the release of £2.5 billion of council money could not be counted within public spending calculations. Mr Clarke said a windfall tax on privatised utilities would not cover the cost of Labour's planned youth training programme, and other items had been omitted from spending and borrowing figures, including £1.8 billion to extend student loans and £640 million for school repairs.

Peter Riddell, page 8



The Queen and President Weizman of Israel make their way up The Mall in the State Carriage yesterday

Kosher chefs cook up royal banquet

By ALAN HAMILTON

BUCKINGHAM Palace went kosher last night when the Queen entertained President Weizman to a banquet at the start of the first state visit to Britain by an Israeli head of state.

Part of the Palace kitchens were given over to Tony Page, London's leading Jewish caterer, to prepare the evening's menu for about 30 of the 200 guests who abide by strict Jewish dietary law.

The Queen served a safe menu of sole, veal and a mango melba, steering well clear of the Jewish prohibitions of shellfish, pork and

meat served with dairy products. Regular Palace kitchen staff prepared the same menu under less stringent conditions for the majority of guests.

Approved Jewish waiters were specially hired for the evening to serve the Orthodox guests. Even the wines, Puligny-Montrachet, a Chateau d'Angles and Veuve Clicquot champagne had to be served by approved waiters for the strictly Orthodox.

A Buckingham Palace spokesman said: "This poses no problem. The Queen is well used to dealing with the special dietary requirements of her guests."

As expected, Mr Weizman extended an invitation to the Queen to visit Israel, one of the few countries she has not visited. Israel would like the Queen to attend next year's celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the state, but Palace sources said privately last night that there was little chance of her fitting a visit into her schedule within the next two years.

Accompanied by his wife Reuma, the 72-year-old former RAF Spitfire pilot and founder of the Israeli Air Force was greeted by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in the traditional ceremony at Horse Guards, as the band of the

Scots Guards played the haunting and mournful Israeli national anthem, *Hatikva*. The level of security in central London was unusually high yesterday, even by state visit standards.

Mr Weizman, headmaster-designate of the William Parker secondary school in the seaside town, told detectives that less than a fortnight before the murder he disturbed a man in the rear garden of his house. He also said he saw a man standing in the park opposite staring at their house, and the family installed security lights as they grew increasingly worried.

Mr Jenkins is a widely-respected and well-liked member of his community. He and his wife Lois, 35, who have been married for 15 years, are regular members of the congregation at Hulton Baptist Church.

Billie-Jo's foster father released on bail

By EMMA WILKINS AND ADRIAN LEE

THE foster father of Billie-Jo Jenkins, the murdered schoolgirl, was released on police bail last night to return to Hastings police station in five weeks' time.

Sion Jenkins, 39, was arrested on Monday and questioned for 36 hours. Last night Detective Superintendent Jeremy Faine, who is leading the investigation, said: "The inquiry is continuing to make substantial progress. However, we would still like to hear from anyone with any information."

Billie-Jo, 13, was bludgeoned to death with an 18 in metal tent spike as she painted patio doors at her home in Lower Park Road, Hastings, on February 15.

Mr Jenkins became Billie-Jo's legal guardian in December after fostering her since 1993 when she joined the couple's daughters Annie, 12, Lottie, 10, Esther, nine, and Maya, seven.

He told police he found her body when he returned home with Lottie and Annie after leaving her alone for 40 minutes. The other two daughters were shopping with their mother.

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Sleaze purge cuts MPs' outside cash

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY AND ANDREW PIERCE

THE Commons purge on sleaze has produced a sharp fall in the amount of outside earnings divulged by MPs. It was disclosed last night.

The second register of MPs' outside financial interests to be published since the introduction of tougher rules shows a reduction of more than £300,000 in declared earnings. However, doubt was cast over MPs' interpretation of the new rules, when the Commons disciplinary watchdog called for a review of the way

the guidelines were followed. Tory MPs in particular have cut the amount of outside income declared in the register, disclosing about £2 million compared with some £2.3 million last year. Labour's declared earnings are under £500,000, compared with £600,000 last year.

For the second year, Roy Hattersley, the former Labour deputy leader, heads the list of declared earnings, disclosing income of up to £110,000 for newspaper work. Page 8

Courts 'unfair'

The British court marital system was condemned as unfair and in breach of human rights in a unanimous ruling by the European Court of Human Rights. Page 11

Human clones

The scientists at the centre of a successful experiment to clone a sheep said that the same techniques could be used on human beings, but it would be unacceptable. Page 3

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Divorce pensions split is delayed for three years

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PLANS to allow divorcing couples to split their pensions at the time they break up will be unveiled in a White Paper today.

Lord Mackay of Ardlough, a Social Security Minister, will announce that the proposals will not be retrospective and are unlikely to come into effect until 2000. The proposals were originally opposed by the Government - until Ministers bowed to Labour pressure to ensure that the Family Law Bill, containing other divorce law reforms, got through the Commons last year. Labour attempted to amend the Bill to include pension splitting but ministers argued that the issue was so complex that it required separate legislation. Labour will almost certainly introduce similar laws, if it wins the election.

Under the plans, divorcing couples will be able to agree to split the capital sum which has already accrued in a

pension fund. The company could either set up a separate pension for the wife (in most cases) or she could transfer the funds to a new personal pension. The costs of transferring the pension would be met



It's an extraordinary breakthrough - they can turn one pension into two identical halves

by the divorcing couple rather than the taxpayer or other pension holders. Although in most cases the new laws will benefit the spouse without a pension, Ministers concede that it could lead to more cases where the husband often agrees that the wife keeps the house as part of a financial settlement because he will get the pension.

Ministers hope that the changes will encourage more women to take out personal pensions. They also point out the advantage of a clean break at the time of the divorce. Under the Pension Act 1995, women are now entitled to a share of their husband's pension when he retires. Some aspects of the legislation are still causing problems. These include what happens where a pension has already been paid out, where the husband has retired.

Tory accuses BBC of paid-leave bias

By CAROL MIDGLEY

THE BBC was accused of political bias yesterday for giving a Radio 4 broadcaster five months' paid leave to fight a marginal seat for Labour.

Ben Bradshaw, a presenter for *The World at One*, has not worked on the programme since being selected as a election candidate for Exeter in September. His Conservative rival, Dr Adrian Rogers, who has a private medical practice in the city, said: "If the BBC was paying for me to campaign I would be able to canvass every house in Exeter but I have to work ten hours a day as a doctor to keep my family fed."

The BBC have given Mr Bradshaw a huge advantage. It is very difficult to find time out of a professional working day to nurse a constituency and, personally, I am self-employed and can only do it with a financial sacrifice. "I am not complaining about my lot but if my opponent is being paid out of mine and every other licence-

payer's money then it is not fair. I have heard of companies who give candidates paid leave to fight elections because they judge it is in their best interests but for the BBC to take that view is quite wrong. I have always said the BBC is left of centre and this confirms my suspicions."

Last night, within hours of the complaint, the BBC said that it had found Mr Bradshaw a full-time job in west London. It added: "He will be working for the new head of business programmes on a project looking at closer integration of radio and television business coverage."

The Exeter seat, which Sir John Hannan, the retiring Tory MP, won with a 4.06 majority in 1992, is regarded as a key marginal that promises a colourful fight. Mr Bradshaw is openly homosexual and Dr Rogers a right-wing moral campaigner who describes homosexuality as "a sterile, disease-ridden and god-forsaken occupation".

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هكذا من راصد

Mind the gap ... in Labour's Underground line

AS THE television cameras swivelled at PM's Questions yesterday, Tony Blair asked John Major three times about plans to privatise London Underground. MPs from the packed benches on both sides roared forth their views. Three times Mr Major asked Mr Blair to wait a minute. A Statement was imminent. All seemed so impatient. PM's Questions came to an end. The cameras, still working, lost interest. So did most of the MPs, who left. So did Mr Blair, who left too, the urgency of his concern miraculously departed. The Statement was left to a thin House, the ghostly Transport Secretary Sir George Young and his ghostly Labour Shadow, Andrew Smith.

The implausible faced the improbable. Once upon a time, *The Times* would have reported not just the Statement and Opposition front bench reply, but the backbench questions too. Today only *Hansard* does. Yet the reaction of the whole Opposition makes a fascinating study. When plans to privatise British Rail were announced (to Labour anger), Mr Blair had only started modernising his party. Now new Labour is ready. The London Underground plans are the first major privatisation idea to which a fully-fledged new Labour Party has had to respond. Yesterday the idea was unveiled. Your sketchwriter was unable to



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

discover any coherent Opposition response, except that they were against it. No case against this privatisation was advanced which was not an case against all privatisations. The implicit view was that the profit motive was incompatible with public service: private ownership of any body delivering a public service, wrong. From the front bench, Mr Smith lent an hysterical tone to a reply almost without content. It was vacillating of ministers to put

forward more than one option. To privatise a public service like this was "an abdication of responsibility". Such a sale was "regardless of the interests of passengers". For the Liberal Democrats, David Chidgey (Eastleigh) opposed the plans, but did not explain why. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Lab, Crewe and Nantwich) called it a "brutal transference of the taxpayers' assets". Tony Banks (Newham NW) said no other country had done it. Ken Livingstone (Brent E) made the

transport case for the former Greater London Council. John Fraser (Norwood) said that new lines would never be constructed by a profit-motivated organisation. Tam Dalyell (Lindithgow) was concerned the tunnels might fall in. Clive Soley (Hammersmith) said that if the Underground were in need of investment, then it could only be sold cheaply. Kate Hoey (Vauxhall), Margaret Hodge (Barking) and David Winnick (Walsall N) implied it was wrong to spend money on advice for this, before an election. Harry Cohen (Leyton) said it proved the Government had "given up on London commuters". Gordon Prentice (Pendle) complained that, for privatisations,

billions were written off. Paul Flynn (Newport W) said that the Channel Tunnel was a bad advertisement for private schemes. Simon Hughes (Lib Dem, Southwark and Bermondsey) and others asked why sufficient private money could not be found without relinquishing public ownership. Two arguments were missing. Nobody tried to distinguish this from previous privatisations or to suggest why this should be blocked, but the others left undisturbed. And (to my astonishment) almost nothing was said by Labour MPs about the privatisation of British Rail as a precedent. They have gone silent on the subject. It was Tories who raised it.

Butcher in E.coli outbreak to reopen

The butcher at the centre of the *E.coli* food-poisoning epidemic which killed 18 people in Scotland, is expected to reopen his shop in Wishaw, Lanarkshire, tomorrow. John Barr & Son has been cleared by North Lanarkshire Council to reopen three months after he voluntarily closed. Yesterday his solicitor, George Moore, said he would be one of the first butchers to introduce shop improvements recommended by a microbiologist in the government report on the outbreak. Three people in Lincolnshire have contracted *E.coli*. They are believed to have developed the infection after eating in an Indian restaurant in Market Deeping.

Break in talks

The Stormont talks on the future of Northern Ireland, which have made little progress since opening last June, are to be wound up next week for the duration of the general election campaign. George Mitchell, the former US senator and talks chairman, is expected to fly home next month.

Beef-ban plan

The Agriculture Minister yesterday petitioned Brussels for a step-by-step lifting of the beef export ban with a proposed certification scheme for BSE-free cattle. If the EU accepts the plan, farmers whose herds meet strict criteria would be able to resume selling animals and beef abroad.

Greenham clear

A survey of Greenham Common, the former US Air Force nuclear base, has found no radiation "hotspots". The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament had claimed there was a cover-up after a fire in 1983, when a B-47 jet fuelled tanks. There has been a leukemia cluster near by.

Drama attacked

A television drama, *No Child of Mine*, which was shown last night as the true story of a girl's sexual abuse, has been condemned as "fiction". The Association of Directors of Social Services says the child portrayed in the programme has a history of making false rape allegations.

Testing fears

Three in ten people would refuse genetic testing for hereditary diseases for fear of having to pay large insurance premiums, according to a survey for the Genetics Forum. Eight in ten believe insurance companies should not be allowed to refuse cover on the basis of test results.

Advert code

A voluntary code encouraging manufacturers to avoid meaningless or misleading claims about the environmental value of their products was announced by John Gummer, the Environment Secretary. The National Consumers' Council said that the code should be backed by law.

Irish envoy

A cousin of the comedian Steve Coogan is to become the next Irish ambassador to Washington. Sean O'Huigin, 52, who talks proudly of his English relative, is fiercely nationalist and was pivotal in the Anglo-Irish negotiations that led to the Downing Street declaration of 1993.

Blood blooms

Anaemic houseplants may really need a blood transfusion, research in Sweden has suggested. A team from the University of Lund has boosted the performance of tobacco plants by giving them the gene for haemoglobin, the red pigment that carries oxygen in the bloodstream.

Seconds out

An attempt by 2,845 children to set the record for the world's largest orchestra has been rejected by the Guinness Book of Records. They played too quickly, under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle in November, and fell short of the required five minutes qualifying time by 27 seconds.

Railtrack lines up with Virgin to buy Tube network

By JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

RAILTRACK and Virgin headed the queue of companies lined up to bid for the London Underground yesterday after the Government confirmed that the network will be privatised within three years.

The sale, which is expected to raise between £600 million and £2 billion, was announced in the Commons by Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, who said it would give the capital a world-class Tube system.

He told MPs that at least £1.2 billion of the proceeds would be ploughed back into the system to complete its modernisation by 2005. Privatisation would "deliver a higher quality Underground, at an affordable cost to passengers and at no extra cost to the taxpayer," he said.

A White Paper giving details of the sale will be published in the summer if the Conservatives win the election. Legislation paving the way for the sale is likely to be announced in the next Queen's Speech with privatisation completed in 2000 or 2001.

The options under consideration by the Government are: selling the entire network to a single buyer; a line by line sale; and a "Tubetrack" infrastructure authority with services franchised to private

operators. Senior sources at Railtrack said that merging the rail and underground networks could deliver huge benefits through lower costs and "through tickets" that passengers could use on trains and the Underground.

London Underground, which had £700 million cut from its Budget last year, was in danger of turning into "the rotten core" at the heart of a modernised railway system.

Virgin, which owns two rail franchises and is a shareholder in Eurostar, said that it would take a close look at the Government's proposals. "The Piccadilly Line to Heathrow, in particular, would be of interest to us," a spokesman said.

Other companies interested in bidding for tube services include Stagecoach, the bus

company that runs South West Trains, and CGEA, the French transport group that runs two London commuter rail franchises. Both said yesterday that they would examine the detailed proposals when they are published. There is also certain to be at least one management and employee buyout bid. Ways would be sought to encourage employees and passengers to take a real stake in the system, the minister said.

Sir George said that there was "no question of breaking up the network", and that the London Travelcard, concessionary fares for the elderly and disabled, and existing levels of service would be safeguarded.

There will also be an industry regulator to safeguard standards of services and fare increases would be limited to the level of inflation for four years after the sale. Average annual fare increases would be 1 per cent above inflation before privatisation, Sir George said.

He won a key concession from the Treasury late on Monday night allowing Transport Ministers to keep most of the proceeds from the sale for investment in public transport. The first £1.2 billion will be ring-fenced for direct subsidy to the new private

operator and "a majority" of any additional proceeds would be used for investment in public transport. However, London Underground sources said that the proposals left the system with a "desperate" funding shortage over the next three years. They insisted that the modernisation of the network could have been completed in five years rather than eight if LU had been left intact in the public sector. Business leaders also expressed disappointment that there had been no attempt to address LU's short-term funding problems. Labour said services would

be cut and stations closed if privatisation went ahead. At Prime Minister's Questions, Tony Blair said a key public asset was being sold at a fraction of its value "so that a few people can make a vast profit with no guarantee of a proper service for the future".

The world's first underground line was opened by the Metropolitan Railway on January 10, 1863. It ran from Paddington in west London to Farringdon Street in the City, and used steam-hauled trains on the service.

Simon Jenkins, page 18



The first Underground train at King William Street station, on the Metropolitan Line, which started in 1863

National Express wins the ScotRail franchise

THE privatisation of the railways was completed yesterday with the award of the ScotRail franchise to National Express, the coach and rail group. John O'Brien, franchising director at the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising, said the deal would save taxpayers an average of £55 million a year in government subsidies.

"National Express is offering to not only run the

existing number of train miles, but they will also be introducing a range of service enhancements, and new rolling stock within the next three years," he said.

Fares will be pegged to inflation for the first three years, then to the retail price index minus one per cent. ScotRail has pledged to maintain existing services, including vulnerable rural lines in the West Highlands.

Schools chief attacks society's self-obsession

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

A SELF-OBSSESSED society that has lost its traditional values and the work ethic is hampering efforts to raise educational standards, the Chief Inspector of Schools said last night.

Chris Woodhead said schools were having to battle with negative aspects of the national culture. As well as a "narcissistic preoccupation with self", these included a relativist approach to knowledge and a sentimental view of the world.

Mr Woodhead, giving his annual lecture in London, said that the best schools overcame this environment. But, with English teenagers' pass rates in mathematics, science and the national language less than half those of France and Germany, serious weaknesses remained.

Mr Woodhead said that the grammar school where he had studied A levels had been built upon the Protestant work ethic. "The underpinning virtue,

though I cannot remember it being referred to explicitly, was fortitude.

"Thirty years on, we live in a society that neither mentions nor believes in anything resembling fortitude: a society characterised by what is a narcissistic preoccupation with self, by a desperate, but inevitably unsuccessful, attempt to live in the present and only the present; by an increasing reliance on therapists and counsellors to bolster our self-confidence and protect us from the emotional impact of the miseries which sooner or later come our way."

The national culture was "in certain key respects profoundly hostile" to schools' attempts to raise standards, said Mr Woodhead, who is in charge of the Office for Standards in Education. Too many teachers were reluctant to take a lead. Many still favoured non-directive teaching, including "respect for the opinions of young children even when these

opinions are plain wrong". Jargon-ridden tracts from academics were partly to blame, Mr Woodhead said. "The longer I do this job, the more important I think it is to question the way in which academics and researchers mystify the business of teaching, and, indeed, children's learning."

The Government's powers were limited, Mr Woodhead said. Its greatest contribution would be to define clearly what schools were expected to do and to devolve "real freedom" to them to meet the requirements, auditing their performance.

"There is every reason to feel optimistic," Mr Woodhead concluded. "For the first time in at least my career, there is a willingness to face up to the fact that too many children are failing to achieve their potential. The issue of standards is now at the top of the educational agenda."

Woman priest among 11 killed on roads in gales

By LIN JENKINS

A WOMAN priest was among eleven people who died in road accidents as the fiercest gales for seven years swept across Britain.

The Rev Janet Shaw-Hamilton was being driven by her friend Jennifer Tye, 63, to a Christian conference when their car exploded as it collided with a tanker on the M5 near Bristol, killing both women. The fire spread to a van, killing the driver, Dennis Brown, 64, from Bridgwater, Somerset.

Mrs Shaw-Hamilton, 54, a mother of two adult children, served as a curate at All Saints' Church in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, for five years until 1995. She was ordained a priest in 1994 and became a chaplain at Alexandra Hospital, Redditch.

A motorist died near by in

an earlier accident on the M5 and a 26-year-old man was killed when his Ford Fiesta ran into a fallen tree at Pontnewydd, Torfaen. Three people died and two were injured when two cars collided head-on at King's Lynn, Norfolk.

Two drivers died after a head-on collision in driving rain in Derby and a man died after a lorry was blown over by strong winds in Scotland.

Winds recorded at up to 90mph, coupled with driving rain, left some coastal towns impassable because of flooding. Ferry services were disrupted, buildings damaged and numerous trees brought down.

Six soldiers from the King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery were airlifted to hospital suffering from hypo-

thermia, with one in a poor condition, after they went missing during a training exercise on Dartmoor. More than a hundred volunteers spent four hours combing moorland for the men as an RAF search and rescue helicopter led the hunt.

A cargo ferry with a crew of 26 was stranded on a sandbank 15 miles off Cromer, Norfolk, in force eight gales before being refloated on the morning tide.

Three engineers stranded for 13 days on the Dubh Artach lighthouse, who were running out of food, were rescued by a Royal Navy helicopter. They were winched to safety after their helicopter was unable to land.

Photograph, page 24
Forecast, page 24

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ANIMAL PASSIONS
How animal prints have hit the high street in Weekend

American feminist gives 49th Reith Lecture

'Colour blindness' fails to camouflage racism

BY CAROL MIDGLEY AND STEPHEN FARRELL

PATRICIA WILLIAMS, the black American feminist, delivering the Reith Lecture on racism last night, argued that the liberal idea that "colour does not matter" was fundamentally flawed.

Professor Williams, the 49th Reith lecturer, said that well-intentioned liberals could not assume that because people were taught not to be racist, racism did not exist. It was part of the "facile innocence" of the three wise monkeys who saw, heard and spoke no evil. She cited the example of her four-year-old adopted son, Peter, whose teachers assured her he was colour blind. Each time he was asked the colour of grass he replied: "I don't know", or "It doesn't matter". After seeking medical advice, Professor Williams discovered his eyesight was perfect. "It turned out my son did not misidentify colour, he resisted identifying colour at all," she said. "Well-meaning teachers at his predominantly white school had repeatedly assured their charges that colour makes no difference."

Professor Williams, 45, said the very reason the teachers said this proved that colour did matter.

Ms Williams, professor of law at Columbia University, New York, could have been said to have lived up to her reputation for the use of impenetrable psychobabble.

"This association of the greenness of grass making no difference was such a precociously cynical retort," she said of her son, "that I began to suspect some social complication in which he was somehow invested."

This anxiety redefined as deficiency suggests to me that it may be illustrative of the way in which the liberal idea of colour blindness is too often compounded. That is to say the very notion of blindness about colour constitutes an ideological confusion at best and denial at its very worst."

She went on: "Certainly the great philosophical inspiring quandary of my life is that despite the multiculturalism of my heritage and profundity of my commitment to the notion of the 'us-ness' of us all, I have little room but to negotiate most of my daily lived encounters as one of them. How alien this sounds — the split without, the split within."

Professor Williams, the great great granddaughter of a black slave impregnated by her white slave master at the age of 13, is only the fourth woman to have been invited to deliver the Reith Lecture, and the third in four years.

American academics are critical of her "narrativist" style of personal anecdote, claiming it lacks academic rigour. Abby Thernstrom, a



Williams: criticised for "narrativist" style

Harvard-educated author on racial politics, said: "She is guilty of intellectual fraud by implying that we still have a caste society in the US. She is muddled and incoherent so I hope her lectures do not make a big splash."

Randall Kennedy, a black Harvard law professor, said: "Facts are important and getting data is important. You can only go so far on the basis of anecdote and memoir."

Professor Williams was defended by J. Woodford Howard, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

"She is to the left of me but she is very well respected," he said. "She is not a kneejerk thinker who simply does what is politically correct, she will quite commonly dissent from what is considered the orthodox PC view."

He added: "She narrates stories of her own personal life as distinct from a social scientist style. It is a very powerful method which is now coming into vogue. In that she is ahead of the game."

Speaking of the tendency to "colour blindness" in today's society, Professor Williams said: "This tension between material conditions and what one is cultured to see or not to see, the dilemma of the Emperor's New Clothes, as I call it, is a tension faced by any society riven by bitter histories of opposed hierarchies."

She added: "Hail the spirit of our infallibly peaceful co-existence, hail our common fate, even as young white men are forming their own private militias, complete with grenade launchers, and one in three young black men are in jail or on probation."

The BBC denied that it had bowed to political correctness in selecting Ms Williams. A spokeswoman said she had been chosen in the usual way: Radio 4 producers were asked to submit suggested names to Annie Winder, head of features. The final decision was taken by the then controller of Radio 4, Michael Green.



Ellen and John Allen outside the Court of Appeal in London yesterday

Schoolgirl pair to be freed a year after victim's death

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

THE parents of a 12-year-old girl kicked to death by two schoolgirls wept yesterday on learning that her attackers would be released on the first anniversary of her death.

John and Ellen Allen were at the Court of Appeal to hear an application by the Attorney-General to increase the two-year detention imposed on the girls, aged 12 and 13 at the time of the attack, by Nottingham Crown Court last year. They had admitted the manslaughter of Louise Allen, who died from a brain haemorrhage after being kicked in the head at a furore in Corby, Nottinghamshire, as other schoolgirls gathered to watch.

Yesterday, three appeal judges, led by the Lord Chief Justice Lord, Bingham of Cornhill, rejected the Attorney-General's submission that the sentence was unduly lenient and said he could not justify the court increasing it. The two attackers, now aged 13 and 14, will be released on April 30, exactly a year after the death of their victim.

The younger of the girls in the dock, who had been sobbing, smiled as she was led out by two care workers and a woman security guard. Outside court, the decision was condemned by Mr and Mrs Allen and other members of Louise's family, who had travelled from Corby.

Mrs Allen said: "It is absolutely terrible. We've done all we can for Louise. We have to lay her to rest now."

She said she had to leave court after a few minutes because she could not listen anymore. "I am sick and tired of listening to how these two girls are ideal, law-abiding, lovely children. They are not. My daughter was an ideal citizen but her life was taken



Louise: kicked to death by two schoolgirls

away," Mr Allen said. "I am bitterly disappointed. We didn't really expect any extra, but we hoped deep down that they would get some more. No sentence would have been long enough for them. They got two years and they are not even going to be serving two years."

At their trial last year, the two girls, who cannot be named, were said by Mr Justice Hadden to have inflicted "wicked violence resulting in the totally unnecessary death of that young girl".

Louise had intervened when the 12-year-old girl started a fight with one of her closest friends but was pulled away by the 13-year-old and kicked in the chest. She was then fatally kicked in the head while lying on the ground. The court was told that the blow was an "unlucky chance" and in most cases would have caused only minor injury.

Lord Bingham said the sentence was in the "appropriate bracket" and that the trial judge had taken into account the loss to the victim's family and the public attitude to that type of offence. "It seems fair to assume that neither contemplated the appalling circumstances to which their action gave rise," he said.

Renaissance book vanishes from Oxford college library

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE disappearance of a rare Renaissance geography book from the library of an Oxford college is being investigated by police.

Stock checks at The Queen's College library revealed that Francesco Bertagnoli's *Geographia*, which was published in Florence in 1480 and is valued at up to £50,000, was missing. It may have disappeared at any time during the past two years, renewing concerns about security at libraries.

John Blair, librarian at Queen's, said the book was especially valuable because it featured maps printed from metal plates. "It is a very rare early geography book. It is interesting because it is a very early example of printed maps." He declined to discuss details of the book's storage or when it had disappeared.

In December 1995, Simon Heighes, a former Queen's and Oriel College don, was jailed for two years after he admitted stealing 78 rare books and manuscripts from colleges in London and Oxford. Dr Heighes, who lectured in baroque music and was also a Radio 3 presenter, stole books over a four-year period.

He hid them under his bed before selling them to Blackwell's bookshop and Sotheby's, claiming they were part of his grandfather's life-long collection.

Among the 33-year-old's thefts was the first edition of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, worth £67,500, which was taken from Christ Church's library. It was traced to America after it had been sold by Sotheby's. Books were also stolen from The Queen's

College and Trinity Music College in London.

Selling a valuable incunabula book printed before 1501 once its disappearance has been reported should be extremely difficult. But Nicholas Poole-Wilson, managing director of Bernard Quaritch, the London book dealer, said the provenance of a book could be disguised.

"The ugly thing that can happen is that the book can be chopped up and sold in pieces. The thief knows he can transform it into a collection of loose plates so it is not recognised," he added.

"There is little that libraries can do if you are up against a committed thief. You can be ever so vigilant but accidents do happen."

A spokesman for the university said this was a college matter but added: "It's a difficult issue. The problem is that the university is a place of learning and it is very important that books are freely available and we would be rightly criticised if all our books were locked away."

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Shades of Thatcher would haunt No 10 under Blair

IN office, Tony Blair would seek to re-establish the power and control that Margaret Thatcher wielded over the government machine. He wants to ensure clear and strong leadership, with Downing Street firmly in the driving seat on all matters of government business.

The key to his success would be a strong team in No 10 which could keep check on Whitehall departments and ensure that any awkward ministers toed the line. Plum posts would be almost certain to go to Jonathan Powell, his chief of staff, Alastair Campbell, his press secretary and David Milliband, currently his policy adviser.

In Opposition, Mr Blair has been accused of turning his private office into a kitchen cabinet. Many Labour MPs are critical, but respect the strength of his

leadership. Mr Blair has strong beliefs and intends to impress them on Whitehall — unlike Mr Major, whose grip on the Government machine has frequently been weak.

Instead, the Labour leader expects Downing Street under his premiership to give out clear signals to the rest of Whitehall. He and his key appointees intend to achieve this by beefing up the political numbers at Downing Street.

Otherwise, as is customary, Mr Blair would work with Mr Major's senior officials, who would take pains to ensure there was a smooth handover.

He would be expected to rely enormously on Alex Allan, the Prime Minister's principal private secretary, and Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary. Their job is to assist a new Prime



Tony Blair believes the key to success in office would be his control of the levers of power. Valerie Elliott, Whitehall Editor, examines how Labour would organise its first government for 18 years

Minister and offer advice. Sir Robin is to retire next year anyway and he would be able to advise Mr Blair on a successor. Similarly, Mr Allan would normally be expected to move back to the Treasury in a senior post.

They would be counter-balanced by the strengthened political presence at the centre of Mr Powell, tipped to take on the job of chief of staff; the bright policy

adviser, Mr Milliband, and Mr Blair's shrewd press secretary and friend Mr Campbell.

Mr Blair's approach is described in Labour circles as "strategic leadership", by which they mean the firm smack of a Prime Minister in control. His team have recognised that an incoming Labour government must make an immediate impression on the Whitehall machine.

otherwise the sheer weight of inertia and everyday business will deflect them from their plans.

Mr Blair and his aides have therefore spent considerable time selecting priorities for government. The deliberations have, however, been difficult for the leader. He has insisted to his staff that his priority is to secure a general election victory and he does not wish to be accused of presumption or complacency by getting embroiled in detailed plans for government.

He is so sensitive to accusations of taking the result for granted, and so irritated when his colleagues discuss possible life at No 10, that he has instructed his press office to stall questions about it from journalists. Nevertheless, political realities dictate that his

office has had to prepare a programme for government. It has examined the present structures and methods at No 10 and Whitehall and has decided there must be much more of a strategic overview on all business from Downing Street. The plans are contained in a document known as a "Day One Brief" which sets out the priorities on winning the election; the ideas for changing ministries; and the outline of a Budget and the first legislative programme to form the Queen's Speech.

Officials at the Cabinet Office under David Wilkinson, head of the machinery of government unit, are already working on some of these plans in preparation for a possible Labour victory.

Leading article, page 19

Policy head would need one eye on second term

ONE of the most important appointments Mr Blair would have to make is the head of his policy unit. He wants somebody inside Downing Street who would run a small team to provide independent advice and to work on long-term policy issues. It is one of the most senior posts in government and the holder would take on the rank of permanent secretary with a salary between £90,000 and £150,000.

The policy unit has up to nine staff and is based in a cluster of tiny second floor rooms at No 10. Its head has frequent access to the Prime Minister, briefs him, prepares him for Cabinet committees, has access to key Government papers and may even be invited to sit in at a Cabinet meeting.

He, or she, may often be asked to resolve conflicts in Whitehall and broker deals between ministers and their departments.

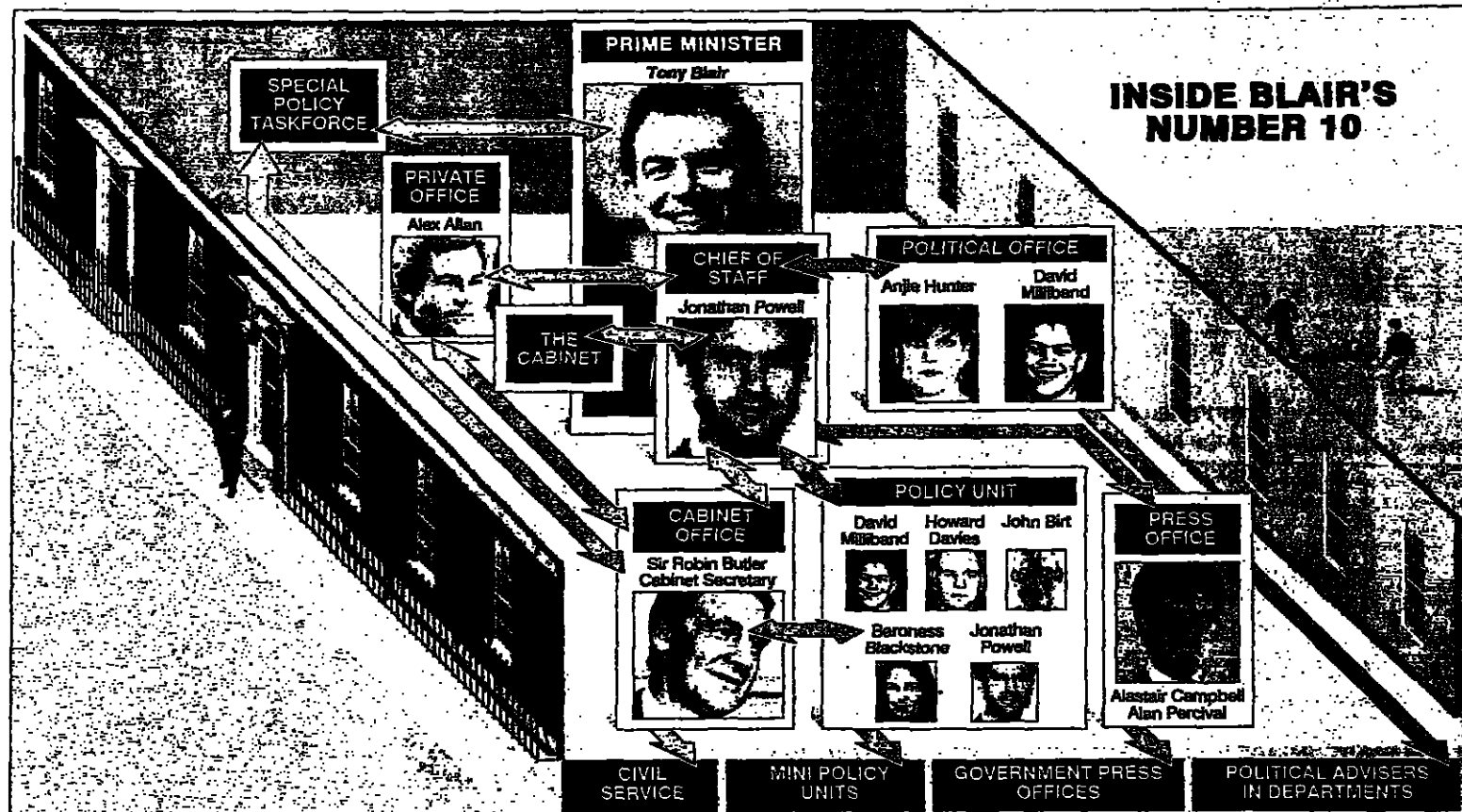
Mr Blair would like to attract a senior figure from the private sector or academia in the mould of Lord Rothschild, a former M15 officer and director of research at Shell, who worked for Edward

Heath. Senior Labour figures accept, however, that it might be difficult to tempt someone from a top corporate job into public office. Someone from the business world might become exasperated with the slow pace of government and would be unfamiliar with Whitehall's subtle ways.

The name of John Birt, Director-General of the BBC, has been touted in Labour circles for the job. Mr Birt, however, does not want it and has just signed a new four-year contract.

The personality of the head of the policy unit — and their rapport with the Prime Minister — largely determines the role. Mr Blair would want somebody who could help him deliver a second term in office, somebody with an eye for the future and a second party manifesto. He is determined that the policy unit head would concentrate on long-term forecasting and not become embroiled in crisis management.

Lord Donoghue headed the unit for James Callaghan and although he wanted to concentrate on longer-term ideas he was frequently side-



Powerful new-style watchdog would be PM's ears

A NEW role of chief of staff at No 10 might be set up by Tony Blair to keep tabs on the activities of every office in the building. The holder of the position would be the Prime Minister's eyes and ears and the link between civil servants and the political staff.

Margaret Thatcher tried something similar, although her appointee, Sir David Wilson, did not stay long at Downing Street and was never an integral part of the machine. Jonathan Powell, chief of staff in Mr Blair's Opposition office, is tipped for the job. Some Whitehall watchers consider the post a non-role and believe Mr Powell would be a better head of policy.

A key role would be to smooth away tensions or rifts between the Prime Minister's private office and the political staff. The chief would have to be in close touch with the political and press secretaries as well as the Prime Minister's principal private secretary. The job would also mean working closely with the Cabinet Secretary and keeping a close eye on committees and their agendas.

David Hunt, asked to investigate the idea of a chief of staff for John Major, came down against the idea. He said the key co-ordination should be between the Cabinet Office and Downing Street, rather than between the various parts of No 10.

In an internal paper he suggested instead that a senior politician with a clear strategy and strength of character should be appointed as a powerful troubleshooter and co-ordinator. His paper led to the appointment of Michael Heseltine as Deputy Prime Minister, one of the most powerful offices in Whitehall.

Mr Heseltine is the Government's troubleshooter and sits at the hub of the machine. His pivotal role is chairing the daily strategy committee, which co-ordinates the presentation of policy. It brings together a number of Cabinet Ministers, senior Whitehall officials and party aides to discuss the day's agenda.

Under Labour it is thought John Prescott would assume the title but not the responsibility for chairing key Cabinet committees. Labour politicians argue that, with a powerful Prime Minister in Downing Street, there would be no need for such a vehicle.

There is also a view that Mr Blair would prefer smaller strategy meetings and he is known to want a strong team of personal political advisers to deal with day-to-day issues as well as to keep a firm rein on the network of advisers working for other Ministers.

No-nonsense press chief likely to shake up briefings

THE appointment of Alastair Campbell as the Downing Street press secretary would signal a no-nonsense style in dealings with the media.

Mr Campbell's strength is that he knows Mr Blair so well that he can second-guess his views and mood on a range of issues. He is also adept at adding the political spin and would work closely with the political secretary and staff brought in by Mr Blair.

His twice-daily briefings in Downing Street and at the

House of Commons would be as well-attended as the days when Sir Bernard Ingham, press secretary to Margaret Thatcher, used colourful language to describe her latest bugbear. Although he was a civil servant, Sir Bernard became so close to Mrs Thatcher that reporters knew he was speaking on her behalf.

A return to this style would delight political journalists who, under John Major, have experienced a succession of press secretaries in the more

traditional and cautious government mould, such as Gus O'Donnell, the Treasury official who has just been appointed Treasury Minister at the British Embassy in Washington. Jonathan Haslam, Mr Major's present press secretary, from the Government Information Service, is expected to quit Whitehall for the private sector if there were a Labour victory.

As well as heading the official Downing Street press office, Mr Campbell would also liaise with government information officers. It is not yet clear how the office would function but, even though some in Whitehall have dubbed it "the double-headed monster", they are convinced it could work.

The weekly meeting of senior Whitehall press officers would be expected to gain new status under the chairmanship of Mr Campbell. Under Sir Bernard, government directors of information rarely missed a meeting, but its importance has dwindled and only chief press officers now regularly turn up.

POLICY TASK FORCES

Better co-ordination is planned between Ministers and departments on key issues. One idea is for the creation of small units with an official from each Whitehall department. They would be able to take an overview on a particular policy, such as youth or the family. Labour frontbenchers have been impressed by the success of the drug unit, based in the Cabinet Office and staffed by officials from the Home Office, Education and Health.

Instead of setting up lengthy Royal Commissions to discuss difficult long-term problems for Government, Mr Blair might invite a mixture of politicians, businessmen, lawyers and academics to examine such large issues as the minimum wage or welfare reform. They would work together as a task force and report to him.

Building work would be needed to get Downing Street into the family way

IF the Blair family move into No 10 the top floor will echo to the sound of children for the first time since Harold Macmillan's grandchildren had the run of it during his tenure, which ended in 1963.

No 10 is not an ideal home for a young family with three lively children, Euan, 13, Nicholas, 11 and Kathryn, 8. Mr Blair would be the first incumbent with children since Clement Attlee moved out in 1951. Attlee managed to make a home for his family by taking over some of the servants' quarters on the top floor to make extra bedrooms. But the Majors' flat at the top of the house is open plan and comprises a series of rooms along a narrow corridor adjacent to other offices inside Downing Street.

Occasionally, the Majors have even been known to use the state drawing room, the



Macmillan's grandchildren were welcome at No 10

White Room, as an alternative sitting room. Labour aides have, however, identified a number of rooms which could be used to extend Mr Major's room and tiny kitchen. There are two or three little-used computer training rooms alongside the flat, as well as a few bedrooms sometimes used by staff.

The main problem would be to ensure privacy for the Blairs. One Whitehall source said it would be possible to have a special door put in to No 10 to section off the private accommodation. The expectation is that if Mr Blair won the

election his family would not formally move in until the accommodation was ready. But the building can be made into a home.

Macmillan's grandson, Lord Stockton, recalled how he was banned by his grandmother from playing hopscotch with the policeman in the black-and-white-tiled hall at No 10. "She wanted to make the job tolerable and so insisted that it should be treated like a family house. But even she thought it was too much to see the policeman playing with me when Cabinet Ministers and other visitors were arriving at the door."

At a party, he recalls, he and his cousins ended up doing the conga in the basement and, because all the corridors interconnected, they ended up in the Ministry of Defence building on the other side of Whitehall.

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'I am delighted that these dresses, which gave me such pleasure, may be enjoyed by others'

Princess's designer dresses go on show before auction

By JOANNA BALE

SOME of the 80 designer dresses belonging to Diana, Princess of Wales, which are to be sold at auction were displayed at Christie's in London yesterday.

Proceeds of the sale, in New York on June 25, will go to the Royal Marsden Hospital Cancer Fund and the Aids Crisis Trust, as well as American cancer and Aids charities.

The auction, which Christie's confirmed was the idea of Prince William, is expected to raise £4 million and will include some of the Princess's most famous dresses, by British designers such as Catherine Walker, Zandra Rhodes and Bruce Oldfield.

A statement from the Princess said: "I am extremely happy to have this wonderful opportunity to raise money for charities devoted to the care of cancer and Aids sufferers both here in the United Kingdom and America. It goes without saying that I am also delighted that these dresses, which gave me so much pleasure, may be enjoyed by others."

Most of the dresses, which range from size 8 to 12, were worn at royal and state occasions between 1981 and 1996. The entire collection will go on view at Christie's in London between June 2 and June 6 before being shipped to New York to the auction.

They include an ivory silk crepe evening dress and jacket embroidered with simulated pearls worn at a fashion awards ceremony in 1989 at the Albert Hall in London and designed by Catherine Walker, whose label appears most often in the collection.

The collection, entitled "Dresses", also features a Victor Edelstein strapless oyster satin dress worn at the Elysée Palace in 1981; a long evening dress of pink wild silk with an embroidered jacket by Catherine Walker, worn to private receptions in India in 1992; a sari-like evening dress of white silk chiffon by Hartnell, worn to the ballet in Brazil; a long strapless evening dress of midnight blue silk net, by Murray Arbell, worn at a party given by King Constantine of Greece at



A black crepe dinner dress by Catherine Walker; another Walker dress outside Christie's yesterday; and an Edelstein dress worn to a state dinner with President Mitterrand



Bad taste king takes trash off the streets

By GRACE BRADBERRY
STYLE EDITOR

BOOB tubes, scarflet knickers and black lace leggings were rehabilitated yesterday as one of London's most modish designers put Soho trash fashion on the catwalk.

Roland Mouret, a Frenchman who designs under the label People Corporation, turned the basement of Holborn's Leisure Lounge night-club into a sleazy dive. Mouret, 36, moved here five years ago, believing the French would not understand his bad-taste style. The furry leg warmers with black stilettos and the bibs, printed with "Amour", which substitute for skirts, were a hit at London Fashion Week. As proof of the label's cachet, American actress Chloe Sevigny, recently featured on the cover of *The Face* magazine and hailed as one of the "coolest" people of the moment, modelled in the show.

Mouret said: "It's about the sort of people I love. Their lives are a bit trashy and nasty on the outside, but they're lovely people inside."

Highlights of the collection were a shaggy black cape and tiny dresses that barely skimmed the thigh, worn with blue cowboy boots. Mouret described the look as "Victorian punk".

Fashion, page 16
Style, page 17

Claridge's in 1986; a long evening dress and tail coat of burgundy velvet by Catherine Walker worn in Korea in 1992 and to film premieres. The Princess's wedding dress will not be sold.

Christopher Balfour, chairman of Christie's Europe, said the Princess had said that the idea for the sale had come

from Prince William. "I imagine the idea came from seeing all these beautiful dresses — I think it's rather sweet."

The collection offers an insight into royal dressing and of the taste of the young Princess "whose every fashion preference inspired the world", Mr Balfour said. He added that the Princess had

chosen the dresses to be auctioned and that there were no reserve prices.

Several charity events are being organised to publicise the sale and the Princess is expected to attend at least one function in London.

Mr Balfour declined to speculate on how much the sale might raise. "It is unquantifi-

able. These sorts of sales are unique. You just can't estimate how much money people will be prepared to pay," he said. "These dresses have a sort of magic about them."

Full details of the collection are being kept secret until the catalogue is published in May, but staff said it contained some dresses never seen in

public because they had been worn at private parties.

Meredith Etherington-Smith, creative marketing director at Christie's, said: "The Princess has huge numbers of admirers all over the world who are fascinated by her, and I think museums will be very interested in bidding."

Asked how the Princess would feel if her dresses were bought by cabaret artists or transvestites, Ms Etherington-Smith said: "I suspect she would be happy as long as they enjoyed them."

The auction is being organised on a non-profit-making basis by Christie's, which emphasised that all the proceeds would go to charity.

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مركز امان لاصح

Chancellor Brown unlikely to avoid tax and spending rises

Public spending and taxes will be higher under a Blair than a re-elected Major government, but the increases will almost certainly be smaller than those recorded since 1992. That is the message of a report, informed I hope, but nearer the mark than either Gordon Brown's Iron Chancellor stance or the Tories' allegations about big rises in spending under Labour.

Conservative Central Office yesterday played down earlier claims that Labour pledges would add £30 billion to spending by the fifth year of a Parliament. This figure is widely regarded as implausible

MODEL ON POLITICS

Government's measures to hold down total spending, Mr Clarke gave examples of privatisation, changes in lone parent benefits and the private finance initiative. However, because of time lags, this would make virtually no difference in the coming year. The Tories also argue that Labour is guilty of accounting errors in failing to recognise that the release of local authority receipts for house building, the extension of student loans and school repairs

financed by banks would all add to public spending and borrowing. Labour would also face strong pressures to increase spending on health and education. I have no doubt of Mr Brown's determination to hold down spending, and he may succeed in the short term. But over a full Parliament it will be hard to avoid increases. In his new *What Labour Can Do*, Richard Layard of the London School of Economics argues that there is no case for reducing public spending, currently over 41 per cent of national income, to below 40 per cent and a slightly higher figure may be

necessary to achieve Labour's social objectives. By contrast, John Major this week reaffirmed his commitment to reducing spending below 40 per cent and keeping it there. This does not mean aiming for 30 per cent since Mr Major's advisers specifically reject the radical options for comprehensive education vouchers and private insurance in health and social security advocated by some on the Tory Right. They favour a gradualist approach including a shift to private financing, where possible, as in higher education. Given the aim of producing a balanced

budget by the end of the century, this might involve reducing the spending share to, say, 37 to 38 per cent over the next few years, depending on the state of the economy. So even on the probably over-optimistic assumption that a re-elected Major Government succeeded in holding down spending, the gap with Labour plans might be about 3 per cent or so of national income. This is a sizeable sum, but less than the five-point rise under the Tories in the first half of the 1990s.

The Downing Street Policy Unit has devised a chart showing public spending as a percentage of

national income in Britain compared with France, Germany and Italy. The two lines are similar from the mid-1960s until the mid-1970s, then start to diverge and are now roughly ten points apart. The implication is that this is the gain from Tory policies — though the gap started under Labour in the late 1970s — and that a Blair government would raise the spending share towards the continental share. Voters do face a choice, but it is much narrower than between British and continental levels of spending and tax.

PETER RIDDELL

Highest paid MPs declare earnings of £50,000 plus

BY ANDREW PIERCE AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

THE highest earners in the House of Commons are making as much money from outside interests as last year, despite a downward trend in the total amount of income declared by MPs.

The total income disclosed in the second register of members' interests has fallen by more than £300,000. However, the figures represent only a fraction of the total earnings from outside interests.

New rules drawn up two years ago after the cash-for-questions affair have forced MPs to declare earnings from outside work if it is related to their Commons position. Several MPs earn six-figure sums through directorships and other outside work that is not connected with the Commons activities.

Although some MPs go into minute detail, several refuse to disclose income from long lists of outside employers on the ground that it is not directly related to their position as an MP. Among the most prominent are Sir Edward Heath, Norman Lamont, David Mellor and Kenneth Baker.

Roy Hattersley, Labour's former deputy leader, leads the list again this year with his

TOP TEN	
	declared earnings of up to
Roy Hattersley, Lab	£110,000
Robert Atkins, C	£85,000
Harold Eilston, C	£80,000
Sir Dudley Smith, C	£65,000
Paul Marland, C	£55,000
Jack Aspinwall, C	£50,000
John Greenwood, C	£50,000
Alun Michael, Lab	£50,000
Keith Hampson, C	£46,000
Patrick Nicholas, C	£46,000

*earnings spent entirely on staff and office expenses

£110,000 earnings from journalism, including up to £80,000 from *The Mail on Sunday* and up to £30,000 from *The Guardian*. Many MPs earn considerably more in undeclared income.

Mr Hattersley is followed in the list by several Tory MPs who have boosted their earnings during the past year. Robert Atkins, a former Environment Minister, has risen to second place in the table, declaring earnings of up to £65,000.

Under the rules, MPs need disclose their earnings only in £5,000 bands and Mr Atkins declared that he is paid between £25,000 to £30,000 as Parliamentary adviser to ICL,

while his consultancies for William Hill and Scottish Coal generated up to £30,000. Harold Eilston (C, Blackpool North) disclosed earnings of up to £60,000 for his management consultancy, which advises clients on international business.

Sir Dudley Smith (C, Warwick and Leamington) declared earnings of up to £55,000 from clients of his management consultancy. Paul Marland (C, Gloucestershire West) matched earnings of up to £55,000, declaring advisory work for the British Metals Federation, Unigate Dairies, Reclamation Association and Rank Xerox.

John Greenwood (C, Ryedale) listed outside earnings of up to £50,000, which elevated him into the top six of declared backbench earners. He earns up to £40,000 as a parliamentary adviser to the Institute of Insurance Brokers, Yorkshire Tyne Tees Television and a health company. He is also a director of an insurance broking firm and declared a further £10,000 for other outside work.

Jack Aspinwall (C, Wansdyke) is in the top 10 for the second year in succession. His consultancies with Rentokil, BAA, and British Gas have brought him an extra income of up to £55,000.



Spencer Batiste (C, Elmst) has a number of outside interests and listed consultancies worth up to £47,000 from a company of solicitors, the Music Industries Association, a telecommunications company and health communications firm.

As some former ministers and fellow MPs prepare to end their Westminster careers, other voluntarily or otherwise, some have taken on additional work to cushion the loss of earnings. However, several of those about to leave Westminster refuse to disclose their

earnings, insisting that their outside work is not a result of their position as an MP. John Biffen, former Leader of the House, who is standing down at the election, listed two directorships but has not revealed the remuneration. Tim Eggar, former Energy Minister, who is also standing down, listed three directorships including one with Monument Oil and Gas. He did not disclose his earnings.

Sir Michael Grylls (C, Surrey North West) whose commission payments from the lobbyist Ian Greer are

under investigation by the Standards and Privileges Committee, listed six directorships and consultancies. No income was declared.

Kenneth Baker, the former Tory Party chairman, who is retiring at the election, also declined for the second time to disclose his income from a string of consultancies and directorships. Mr Baker holds eight salaries positions ranging from Hanson to Bell Cablemedia.

Other MPs intending to remain at the Commons joined the ranks of refusniks.

Sir Edward Heath, the Father of the House, has angered MPs for the second year running by failing to divulge his outside earnings.

Sir Edward, who has become a wealthy man since he lost the Tory leadership in 1975, listed his chairmanship of Dumpton Gap, the company he set up in 1976, as a channel for his income. The undisclosed proceeds from writing, lecturing, television and radio broadcasts are paid into the company. He resigned his membership of Lloyd's in December 1995.

Major is expected to name the day in two weeks

BY PHILIP WEBSTER POLITICAL EDITOR

SENIOR Tories expect John Major to announce the election date as May 1 after a Cabinet meeting on March 13. But party strategists are still keenly debating the date for the dissolution of Parliament and the launch of the campaign proper.

In recent elections there has been only a short interval between the announcement of the date and the closing of Parliament. This time, because there are seven weeks between March 13 and May 1, John Major may announce that the Commons and Lords will sit until just before or after Easter with the "on-the-road" campaign starting on Monday, April 7.

Some at Conservative Central Office are arguing that the long gap would give Labour a head start, enabling them to start campaigning while Tory MPs are detained by push through the remaining business. But senior figures doubt whether there is any point in Mr Major delaying the announcement beyond March 13. By then it will be too late to call the election for April 10.

A declaration after the March 13 Cabinet meeting would enable him to use the Conservative Central Council meeting at Bath on the following two days as an election rally.

Delaying the announcement would have little effect because Labour will be working to a May 1 date in any case. The only legislation to go through will be that which has been agreed between both sides or contentious matters on which the Government is seeking a Commons confrontation with Labour and for which all MPs would wish to be present.

Many Tories, however, do not want Mr Major to dissolve Parliament too early. They want him to use debates on some unresolved issues, such as the Lords defeat over minimum sentences, to try to embarrass Labour. They are also mindful of their privileges. As soon as Parliament is dissolved they cease to be MPs.

There is nothing new about a long interval between the calling of the election and the dissolution of Parliament. In 1950 the election date was announced on January 11, Parliament was dissolved on February 3 and the election took place on February 23.

IN PARLIAMENT

Today in the Commons from 9.30am, backbench debates: From 2.30pm, education and employment; questions: debate on operation of the Inheritance Tax; Crime (Scotland); Bill remaining stages: Scotland Legal Services Commission and Commissioner for Local Authorities in Scotland Bill; Food Presentation and Land Drainage (Scotland) Bill; remaining stages: In the Lords: the case for a London strategic authority; dissolution of lottery funds for film production.

Most of Blair's team benefit from blind trusts

BY ANDREW PIERCE POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TWO thirds of the Shadow Cabinet receive donations towards their office running costs from a network of anonymous donors, the register has disclosed.

The money is channelled into the Shadow Cabinet through a secret web of trustees who make donations to four blind trusts operated by the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Tony Blair, John Prescott, Gordon Brown and Robin Cook, the four most senior members of the PLP, are all beneficiaries.

The £500,000 Labour Leader's Office Fund, which was set up by Mr Blair's aides last year, has been referred to the Select Committee on Standards and Privileges.

Mr Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, receives an undisclosed donation to his office costs from the Industrial Research Trust. John Prescott, the

deputy Labour leader, also has his own blind trust, the John Prescott Campaign Research Trust, which was set up at the same time as Mr Blair's. Mr Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, receives money from the Labour Front Bench Research Fund, a blind trust that receives a substantial donation each year from trade unions.

None of the MPs receives any personal gain from the funds. Even their own staff are not told the identity of the donors. The four funds are controlled by Labour Party trustees.

Other Shadow Cabinet members who receive support from the Labour Front Bench Research Fund are Tom Clarke, spokesman for the disabled, Margaret Beckett, trade and industry, David Blunkett, education and employment, Ron Davies, Welsh affairs, Harriet Harman, social security, Michael Meacher, environmental protection, Marjorie

Mowlam, Northern Ireland, Clare Short, overseas development, and Jack Straw, home affairs.

The Shadow Cabinet members who list no payments from blind trusts are Frank Dobson, environment, Donald Dewar, Chief Whip, David Clark, defence, Jack Cunningham, heritage, Chris Smith, health, Ann Taylor, Shadow Leader of the House, Gavin Strang, agriculture, and George Robertson, Scottish affairs.

Blair: £500,000 fund

Poll shows Labour to be Asian choice

BY POLLY NEWTON

SEVEN out of ten Asian voters in Britain are likely to support Labour at the next election, according to a poll by MORI.

The survey, carried out for the Asian Broadcasting network Zee TV, illustrates the potential impact of the Asian vote in marginal seats around the country. There are 36 constituencies where the number of Asian voters is greater than the majority secured by the winning candidate in 1992.

After the poll results were published yesterday, Nij Deva, the Tories' only Asian MP, urged Conservative Central Office to "stand up and take notice". Mr Deva, MP for Brentford and Isleworth, said: "It is a critical factor in the next election as to how these people are going to vote. A difference of 200 to 300 votes this or that way will make the shape of the next government."

"This is a figure which political leaders will ignore at their peril as the next six weeks unravel."

The survey of 1,003 Asian voters found that 58 per cent are dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country. Asked which party they were most inclined to support, 70 per cent said

Labour, 25 per cent the Tories and 4 per cent the Liberal Democrats. Thirteen per cent said they did not know.

There was a surprise response to a question about immigration laws, with 43 per cent saying they were "about right" and 18 per cent saying they were not strict enough.



Deva: urged Central Office to take notice

Ministers reverse education defeat

THE Government's defeat in the Commons last month over plans to allow the expansion of grant-maintained schools was overturned by the House of Lords yesterday (Polly Newton writes).

Peers voted by 169 to 127 to restore a clause in the Education Bill that will enable grant-maintained schools to increase their capacity by up to 50 per cent without central approval.

But ministers face having to reverse another defeat inflicted on the Bill on Monday night, when the Lords unexpectedly voted for new restrictions in a clause aimed at increasing selection in second-

ary schools. Under the Lords amendment, schools that want to expand selection procedures will have to consult neighbouring schools.

The clause allowing grant-maintained schools to expand their capacity was rejected in the Commons three weeks ago after a tie was mistakenly counted as a one-vote majority for the Opposition. The clause had been rejected at the committee stage when two Tory MPs were absent for the vote.

Opposition peers argued yesterday that they should not be expected to agree something that had twice been rejected by MPs.

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THE TIMES DILLONS CRIME FORUM



Learn the art of **CRIME WRITING** with Minette Walters and Colin Dexter

TWO of Britain's leading crime novelists, Minette Walters (above) and Colin Dexter, will discuss the art of crime writing at a Times/Dillons Forum at 7.30pm on Tuesday, March 4, at the Institute of Education, London WCI. The audience will also have a chance to question the authors.

Dexter's books are worldwide bestsellers and his Inspector Morse television series topped the ratings with 18 million viewers. Minette Walters has also had television success with *The Sculptress*, which will be followed in May by *The Ice House*.

The admission price includes £2 off the price of Walters's new novel *The Echo* (£16.99) and £1 off Dexter's *Death is Now My Neighbour* (£9.99), both published by Macmillan.

For full details of how to book, see coupon (below).

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Patient writer's Bafta bonanza

Steamed puddings are out, pasta is in, under government guidelines

The chips are down for stodgy school dinners

By JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

STAPLES of the traditional school dinner — steamed puddings, sausages, dumplings and lemon meringue pie — will disappear from the menu if canteen cooks take the advice of Cheryl Gillan, the Education Minister.

She issued guidelines yesterday to make school meals healthier. Recognising that the chip cannot be banned, she urged schools to serve chunky or oven-cooked chips rather than the crinkle-cut variety or French fries.

Mrs Gillan, launching the initiative at Argyle Primary School in north London, said: "School food has improved by leaps and bounds in recent years. Greasy chips and soggy vegetables should be a thing of the past. With the help of this guidance, I want to see school food get even better."

The initiative will encourage cooks to give pupils less fat, sugar and salt, and more fibre, vegetables and carbohydrates. The aim is to make popular food healthy within a limited budget. Spaghetti bolognese should contain more pasta and less meat, and hamburgers less burger and more bread, to cut fat and cost and to boost energy-giving carbohydrates. The smell of



The old school: how traditional canteen fare of meat and two veg was served up in the past

boiled cabbage should be a thing of the past if schools follow the advice to steam vegetables lightly.

Caterers, governors and local authorities will receive separate advice on steering children towards healthier eating. The television chef Ainsley Harriott, in a foreword to the booklet, urges schools to "nibble their tastebuds and make school dinners the winners".

Schools are urged to set realistic objectives and to assess their success every term. The guidelines are the first since 1980, when the Conservatives scrapped the nutritional standards that ruled school

kitchens, but the Government has ruled out compulsion.

A spokesman for the Education Department said the improvements were voluntary because "we don't believe someone in London should be telling pupils in Lancaster what to eat". But campaigning groups, while welcoming the advice, predict that it will be ineffective if not enforced.

Ben Priestley, assistant national officer of Unison, the public service union, said: "Without the necessary backing under legislation, the guidelines — however good — can still be ignored by school-meals providers, particularly private contractors motivated

by profit. Often the cheapest contract wins and caterers opt for a free-choice cafeteria system, providing fast food such as burgers and chips."

Inogen Sharp, director of the National Heart Forum and secretary of the School Meals Campaign, said it was crucial the guidelines were written into school meals contracts.

Prices ranged from 65p in Fife to £1.50 in the London borough of Greenwich when a survey was carried out for Unison last year. Yesterday, there was a similar variety of prices and dishes.

Lunch at Manchester Grammar School, one of the leading independent schools, cost £1.43. The main options were layered liver and bacon, vegetarian chili, pork sausages, fish fingers or 13 salads. All were served with a choice of chips, rice, baked beans and vegetables.

The hot pudding was apple crumble and custard, or there were buttered scones, fruit or yoghurt.

At Dulwich High School for Boys, the south London comprehensive formerly called William Penn, the menu was simpler. For £1.08 the pupils had savoury mince or veggie burger with diced carrots or pasta, followed by chocolate roll and custard.



Chips with everything: but modern schools' cafeteria-style dishes can be improved

Mouse causes loss of 50 jobs

A catering firm supplying school dinners has been shut down with the loss of 50 jobs because a fieldmouse crept into a tinned-food store.

Ian Denley, solicitor for Eve Catering of Wellington, Somerset, said: "There was no risk of contamination because everything was in tins. The firm lost business worth £160,000 and the chance of a £1 million contract that would have created 20 jobs."

Body retrieved

The body of a miner was recovered seven hours after he was buried under more than 30 tonnes of rubble. John Hall, 56, was leading four colliers down a tunnel at the Castle drift mine at Blenkinsopp Castle, Northumberland.

'Drugs' vomited

A man was under armed guard in hospital in Shannon, Ireland, after vomiting packets suspected to contain cocaine on a flight from Heathrow to New York. The aircraft was diverted after the Jamaican man, 20, became ill.

On your bike

Cotswold councillors are to spend £5,000 on nine mopeds so that unemployed people in rural areas can get to interviews and jobcentres. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council will rent out the 49cc machines for £1 a week.

Has-beans

Tins of beans at least 18 years old were found on a grocer's shelves by trading standards officers. Kapur Mehan, of Nottingham, who admitted contravening the Food Safety Act, was given a 12-month conditional discharge.

Flower protected

A tiny flower found only on limestone around Ingleborough in North Yorkshire is to be protected against ramblers, potholers and cars. About 2,000 *Arenaria norvegica anglica*, a variety of sandwort, survive.

Patient writer's Bafta bonanza

By DALYA ALBERG

A FILM yet to be released in Britain but already hailed as a classic was showered yesterday with 13 Bafta nominations.

The English Patient, a love story starring Ralph Fiennes, received 12 Oscar nominations last week. It was brought to the screen by Anthony Minghella, who began screenwriting for the children's television series *Grange Hill*. He wrote and directed the acclaimed film *Truly, Madly, Deeply*, but struggled for four years to find backing for *The English Patient*, which he adapted from a Booker Prize-winning novel by Michael Ondaatje.

The nominations by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts included best film, best achievement in direction and best adapted screenplay. The film opens on March 14.

Fiennes was nominated for best actor. His estranged wife, Alex Kingston, has been nominated for best television actress for *Moll Flanders*.

Other films that received multiple nominations for the Baftas were *Shine*, *Secrets and Lies* and *Evita*. The awards will be presented on April 29.

Iron Lady would have approved of emphasis on vitamins

THAT catchy refrain of the early 1970s, "Margaret Thatcher, milk snatcher", was unfair to the Education Secretary, as she was then.

As one of the parliamentary rebels on school milk — John Gummer was another — I had frequent discussions with her about school meals in general, and milk in particular. She readily accepted the importance of school meals as an essential source of nourishment for children who would otherwise be malnourished. She claimed that her defence of school milk had been



Dr Thomas Stuttford

overruled in Cabinet, implying that Edward Heath, the Prime Minister, was opposed to a daily ration.

The new government guidelines on healthy eating for children are aimed partic-

ularly at those preparing school meals, but apply equally to whoever looks after the household menu. They recommend that, as a minimum, school meals should provide a third of a child's daily calorie

requirement. As in all recent advice, the authors would like to see a reduction in the overall amount of fat eaten, so that it accounts for no more than 35 per cent of the daily calorie intake. Saturated fats — those derived from animals whether as meat, cream or milk — should not contribute more than 11 per cent of the daily calorie count.

The recommended diet for children emphasises the importance of the anti-oxidising vitamins. It is suggested that school meals provide an admirable opportunity to make

certain that children have a satisfactory folic acid intake, and that school lunch should provide 40 per cent of the daily requirement of this vitamin, 35 per cent of the necessary vitamin C, and 30 per cent of vitamin A. The antioxidant vitamins protect against infection, and in the long term are cardio-protective and anti-malignant.

Baroness Thatcher, never the milk snatcher, will be pleased to see that milk, and the calcium that is one of its most important constituents, receives a special mention.

The guidelines recommend semi-skimmed milk, presumably for the over-fives, as an invaluable source of calcium, and also commend low-fat cheeses and yoghurt.

Everyone is encouraged to eat plenty of polysaccharides, whether in the form of rice, starches, porridge or similar foods. We should all be eating more fruit and vegetables, select lean meat, enjoy our fish, have plenty of beans and peas, and of course, keep our fat intake down to under 35 per cent of our total calorie intake.



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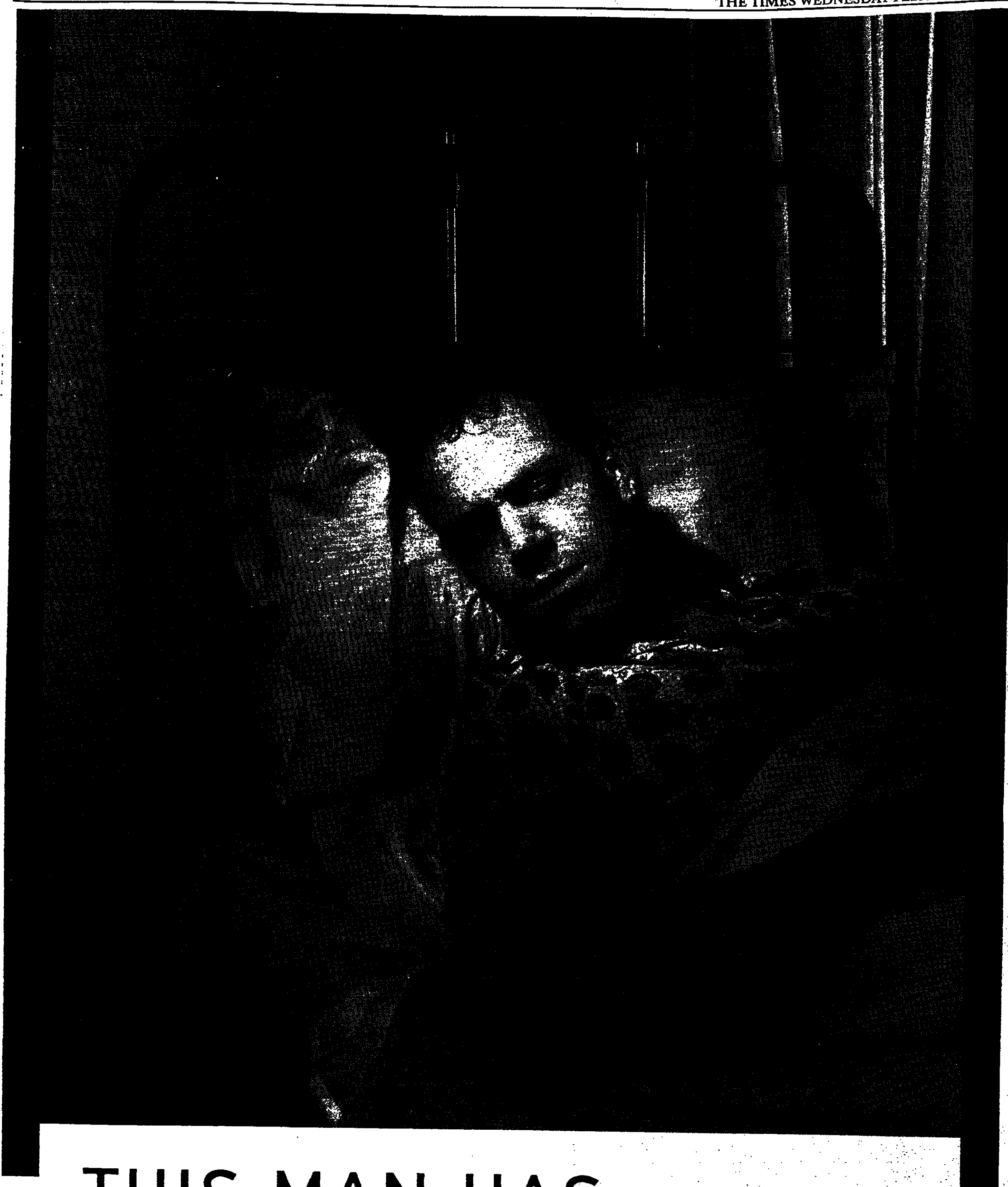
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Courts martial system 'breaches human rights'

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE British court martial system was condemned yesterday as unfair and in breach of human rights by nine judges in a unanimous ruling by the European Court of Human Rights.

The historic ruling on a military system that has been in force for 600 years followed a judgment in the case of Lance Sergeant Alex Findlay, of the Scots Guards, who was sentenced to two years in prison for threatening to shoot himself and a number of colleagues on a tour of Northern Ireland in 1990.

Mr Findlay, 35, pleaded guilty, but was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder after seeing comrades being mutilated in the Falklands War and being injured during the battle of Mount Tumbledown.

The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg ruled against the Ministry of Defence in a 22-page judgment and awarded Mr Findlay £24,000 costs. However,



Findlay: suffered from post-traumatic stress

the judges, including Sir John Freeland, a British judge, refused to approve his claim for £440,220 compensation for loss of earnings and pension. They said they could not speculate on the outcome of his court martial if there had not been a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights. The case has

already caused the ministry to change the court martial system, which has existed in its present state since 1955. From April 1, amendments brought in under the 1996 Armed Forces Act will ensure that an accused soldier is no longer charged and sentenced by a senior officer from his own regiment or chain of command.

Under the Act, the presiding officer at a court martial will be from another area of command and the judge advocate, a civilian barrister working in the court martial system, will have greater powers than at present.

The European court did not make any comment on the changes to the court martial system, but the ministry is convinced that it has done enough to meet the criticisms contained in yesterday's judgment.

Lawyers acting for the ministry have advised that the Findlay case would not open the floodgates for compensation claims from other Service personnel who believed that their court martial had been unfair. However, the Strasbourg court was adamant that the present system was in breach of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights and that trial by court martial lacked the degree of independence required.

Mr Findlay, who became a painter and decorator after being dismissed from the Army six years ago, took out a civil case against the ministry and was awarded £100,000 because the court martial had failed to take fully into account the pressure he had been under at the time of the incident after his Falklands experience. His lawyers argued that the ministry had failed to develop treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder, although it was recognised by many other countries.

Mr Findlay said yesterday: "I know I committed offences and I realise I had to be punished but medical reports gave a reason why I was in there, but that wasn't taken into consideration."

Fifty other cases 'will cost millions'

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

LAWYERS said yesterday that there were more than 50 outstanding cases similar to Mr Findlay's and they could lead to compensation claims for millions of pounds.

They added that the reforms to the court martial system, which come into effect in April, would not stop further legal challenges in the European Court of Human Rights. Gilbert Blades, a solicitor in Lincoln who specialises in court martial, said that he intended to test the Ministry of Defence's belief that it was now conforming to the Convention on Human Rights.

"Defendants will still be tried in the way they are now," Mr Blades said. "All that has been done is a little tampering with the way the court martial is convened. You will still have

the same result: a tribunal with no independent input at all."

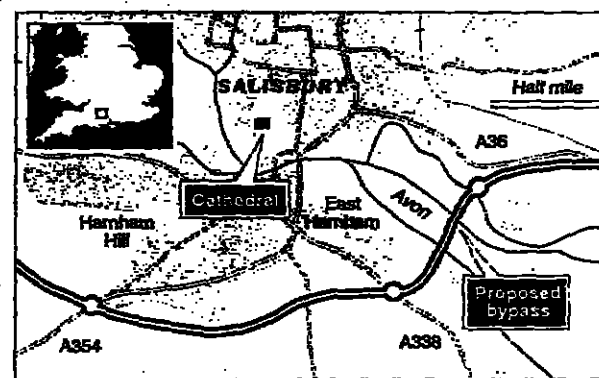
From April there will be a right of appeal against sentence, but the only possible appeal against conviction will remain as now, on a point of law, and will not allow retrial.

Under the Armed Forces Act 1994, changes to the system include the introduction of a military prosecution service and independent judges who will adjudicate on cases. A reviewing authority will also be set up in each service to conduct a single review of each case.

In 1995, 500 courts martial were held, of which 135 were contested and 57 resulted in acquittals. The percentage of acquittals is broadly in line with the criminal courts.



Protesters on the route of the bypass yesterday. The dual carriageway would cut through protected meadows and across the River Avon



Bypass critics form united front

THE largest alliance of environmental groups converged on Salisbury yesterday to demand that the city's proposed bypass be scrapped. Opponents claim that the road is the most environmentally damaging scheme left in the Government's roads programme.

Twenty-one groups, who claim a joint membership larger than the combined ranks of the main political parties, have formed the Salisbury Alliance. They include Friends of the Earth, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Council for the Protection of Rural England as well as small local groups, such as cycling campaigners.

Jonathan Porritt, the veteran environmentalist who is patron of the Salisbury Alliance, said the bypass was "a litmus test of the sincerity of all the political parties". Michael Meacher, a Shadow Environment spokesman, said last week that Labour would impose a moratorium on the bypass if the party won the general election.

Hares may have met their last Waterloo

By RUSSELL JENKINS

ANIMAL rights campaigners and blood sports enthusiasts faced each other across barbed wire yesterday for what could be the last confrontation at hare coursing's "cup final".

The Waterloo Cup, held on a windswept field on Merseyside, once provoked violent clashes. The heavily policed confrontation has now grown into an annual ritual on the opening day of the three-day event where, since 1836, 64 greyhounds have competed to be top dog at the expense of the hare. The event could be outlawed, along with fox hunting, under Labour, which

has pledged to give MPs a free vote on banning blood sports.

The two sides — campaigners in anoraks and woollen masks, largely passive, and sullen coursers in outdoor Barbour and camouflage jackets — stared at each other across a ditch outside Great Altcar.

On an open field a quarter of a mile away, a brace of greyhounds, flanked by about 6,000 spectators, were held in a coupling collar ready to be slipped as soon as the 60 beaters flushed a wild hare out into the open.

When the hare has an 80 yard start, greyhounds with names such as Droopys Tel, Jive Boogy and Midsum-

mer Flash are unleashed. They are awarded points for speed and their ability to turn as the hare runs for its life towards specially grown rushes where the dogs, who hunt by sight alone, cannot follow.

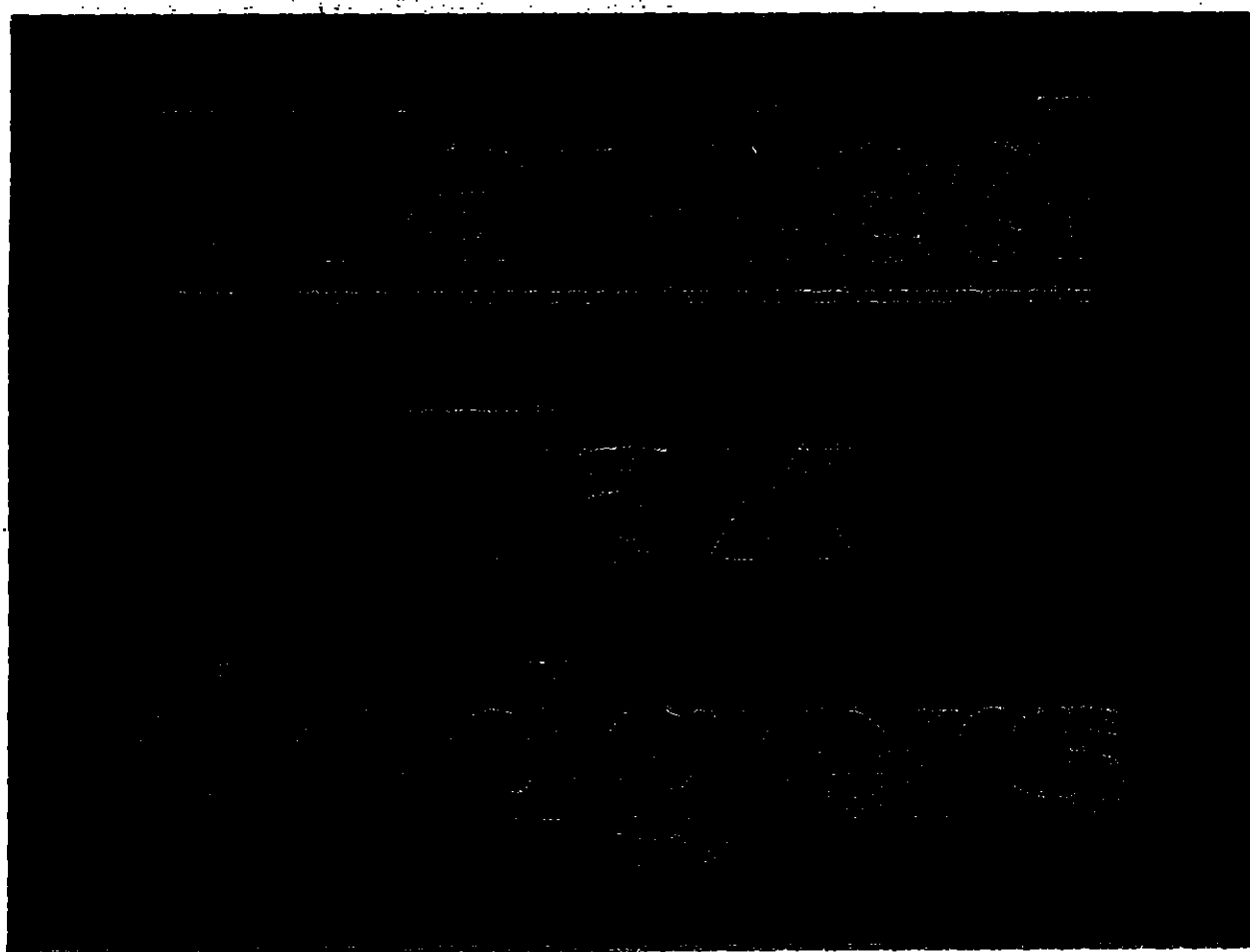
Most hares manage to outwit their pursuers, but the unfortunate few — 11 last year over the three days — falter to be fought over by the dogs. Coursing's supporters say it is the only blood sport where a "kill" is not the object. They also argue that a ban will drive coursing underground and result in unpoliced slaughter.

Sir Mark Prescott, a senior steward, described the 1997 audience as "90 per

cent job and 10 per cent snob". He was only partially joking. This is where the Range Rover crowd stands shoulder to shoulder with the working class. "It would be a tragedy if hare coursing was banned," he said.

Paul Hill, a self-employed electrician and one of a party of 12 from Bradford staying at a bed and breakfast in nearby Southport, said: "It is the working man's opera."

□ The last council to allow grouse shooting on its moorland has banned the field sport. Bradford Metropolitan Council, which owns Ilkley Moor, west Yorkshire, says shooting goes against the hilltop's use as a recreation area.



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Televised tears are official epitaph for Deng

Cacophony of city's growth muffles noisy tribute to reformer

FROM JAMES PRINGLE
IN BEIJING

IT WAS ironic that, in the end, most citizens outside the centre of Beijing did not hear trains hoot for three minutes and factory sirens sound in mourning for the death of Deng Xiaoping yesterday, because of the thunderous noise of traffic and construction. In a way, it was a fitting epitaph for Deng, China's last great revolutionary leader, for he brought the burgeoning development to China.

A small incident illustrated the strengths and repressions of Deng's China outside Beijing railway station — a relic of the Maoist era — just before 10am, the hour of the start of the Chinese leader's official funeral in the Great Hall of the People.

A young man was telling a foreign correspondent how without Deng's reforms he would never have been able to go to university when police asked for the journalist's credentials, saying no interviews were permitted without the permission of the railway department's foreign affairs bureau. There was a danger, the police captain said, that "a crowd would gather".

Soon afterwards the station clock chimed the opening bars of *The East is Red*, one of the few places in China where the Cultural Revolution anthem can still be heard, and on the



President Jiang Zemin, centre, and a People's Liberation Army officer, weep for Deng at Beijing's Great Hall of the People yesterday. Their sentiments are echoed in Chengdu, Sichuan province



massive television monitor on the front of the building, Li Peng, the Chinese Prime Minister, in a broadcast from the Great Hall, said three words — "Grieve in silence" — and bowed his head. Hundreds at the station stood, solemn but dry-eyed.

Deng is respected, rather than loved, in China for the relative prosperity he has brought many. This is partly a legacy of the greater sophistication of a better-off population, whose concerns are now less revolutionary than workaday, and partly as a result of his darker side, most notably

the military crackdown he ordered on pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in June 1989.

Because he is not universally loved, as was Zhou Enlai, the former Prime Minister, whose 1976 obsequies set off riots, most people regret his passing but regard it with a relative lack of emotion. This is why, apart from pictures on state television of people weeping — are selected by the cameramen under party instructions because they are crying — most people have contained their tears.

President Jiang Zemin

sobbed as he began to deliver his 50-minute eulogy. "With Jiang, some of it at least has got to be political theatre," said one analyst. "At the same time, most of the ordinary people who are seen crying are on Chinese television. It's all part of the contrived, stage-managed nature of Deng's death and aftermath. You don't see people crying as you travel round the city."

It is only in recent times that weeping has become acceptable in China. During the 1960s and 1970s, when children were sent off to the "grassroots to learn from the

peasants", parents and offspring had to keep a stoic demeanour. Nowadays, people at railway stations do not feel bad to be seen fighting back tears when saying goodbye to loved ones. It is also acceptable for lovers to embrace and hold hands. Once, as I saw here in the Seventies, even love seemed to be dead.

It would be hard to imagine Deng, the crusty old revolutionary and Long Marcher, to have ever been caught crying. "Deng was okay, but nobody will cry, only his family," a taxi driver told me the morning after the paramount

leader died last week aged 92. On the other hand, diplomats say that tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of Chinese would have turned out to pay their last respects to the diminutive Sichuanese for the better life his reforms gave them.

But so nervous of unrest is the new leadership under President Jiang, who used an almost archaic Marxist nomenclature during his oration, that the Government has permitted only "official", carefully choreographed mourning, hussing in mourners from factories and work units under

strict supervision. Because of demonstrations prompted by the spontaneous mourning of popular leaders, including Zhou, in 1976 and 1989, "spontaneity" is almost synonymous with "counter-revolution".

Yet there were some spontaneous moments yesterday when Tiananmen was reopened. Several dozen Chinese rushed to lay flowers on the monument to people's heroes — a focal point of the 1989 Tiananmen events — or shed their outer garments to reveal white mourning sheets underneath, or to post poems or posters. They were quickly

removed and a number were detained.

In his eulogy to 10,000 party members, with Deng's ashes at centre stage in a casket wrapped in the red hammer-and-sickle Communist flag, Mr Jiang used the word "comrade" frequently and vowed to continue Deng's free-market reforms, which have improved the lives of hundreds of millions of Chinese but have brought no political relaxation.

Deng's ashes were to be committed to the sea.

Leading article, page 19

North Korean defector dies after being shot by 'agents'

Seoul: A North Korean defector died in a hospital near the South Korean capital yesterday, ten days after he was shot by suspected Pyongyang agents.

Li Il Nam, 36, a relative of the former wife of Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader, was shot outside his temporary home at Bundang, south of Seoul. Police said the two gunmen were armed with Belgian-made Browning pistols, often used by North Korean agents.

In another development yesterday, President Kim Young Sam of South Korea publicly apologised for a bribery scandal and banished one of his sons allegedly involved in it. "I will not keep him near me," Mr Kim said in a nationally televised speech marking the fourth anniversary of his inauguration.



Li Il Nam, 36, a relative of the former wife of Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader, was shot outside his temporary home at Bundang, south of Seoul.

Hambo Steel Industry, a flagship of the Hambo group, the nation's fourteenth largest conglomerate, went bankrupt last month with debts of \$6 billion (£3.6 billion) — 22 times the value of its collateral. The debt was incurred mostly in government-controlled bank

loans. After Mr Kim's public apology, Lee Hong Koo, the chairman of the ruling New Korea Party and other NKP leaders tendered their resignations. Earlier, the 12 top officials in the President's secretariat stepped down.

The President gave no clear indication over whether he accepted the resignations, which would put the ruling party in disarray in the run-up to presidential elections in December. Radical South Korean students demanding the resignation of the President clashed with riot police yesterday, hours after the apology was made.

Strike plans: South Korea's outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions said it would launch a general strike on Friday unless a controversial new labour law was repealed. (Reuters/AP/AFP)

'Advisory role' for mercenaries

Sydney: Foreign mercenaries hired to help to crush rebels on the Papua New Guinea island of Bougainville would act in an advisory capacity and not take part in frontline fighting, Sir Julius Chan, the Prime Minister, promised last night (Roger Maynard writes).

Speaking on Australian television, Sir Julius defended his decision to draw on overseas forces in the nine-year-old secessionist conflict. He admitted privately that some of those involved were British and American soldiers. "They are here to upgrade the capacity, to get our soldiers to deal with a very hostile situation," he said. "But they will only be part of the advisory team... and we will not be engaging them in the front line."

Israel turns desert salt water into wine

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN JERUSALEM

NOT content with making the desert bloom, Israeli expertise has now ensured that drinkers will soon be able to toast each other with cabernet sauvignon produced from grapes grown with salty groundwater in the Negev.

A team of university researchers from Israel and Turkey was reported to have succeeded in producing a successful first crop of seedless, purple-red grapes whose wine, they claim, tastes just like cabernet

sauvignon. Professor Yiftah Ben-Asher of the Desert Research Institute at Ben-Gurion University disclosed to a conference on desert agriculture attended by delegates from Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco and the Palestinian Authority that his half-acre of vines had just produced their first harvest.

A year after the institute planted its experimental crop, researchers planted a much larger vineyard, soon to expand to 20 acres, intended for commercial production. The wine will be bottled at Israel's Rishon LeZion winery.

"The wine has the same colour, aroma and taste as cabernet sauvignon grown in sweet water," Professor Ben-Asher claimed. "At least to the layman. We are now working to improve the flavour even more."

He said that underground water in the Negev has about one-tenth the salt concentration of the sea, but even that is fatal to most fruit and vegetables. The secret of the desert-produced vintage is that the root stock of the vines involved appears to work as a filter that keeps the salt out of the grapes.

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Swedes' taste for EU turns sour as outsider Norway finds life sweet

BY ROGER BOYES

SWEDEN'S brief marriage with the European Union is turning sour and a growing number of citizens are openly questioning the value of membership. That disillusion contrasts starkly with — and is partly fed by — the bouncy optimism of the Norwegians who voted to remain outside the EU.

The tale of the two Scandinavian neighbours provides a modern fable that is giving Central Europeans pause for thought as they queue for admission to the club: EU membership is no longer synonymous with prosperity.

Less than three years after voting to join, Sweden has become deeply hostile to Brussels. Some 60 per cent of ruling Social Democrats would like to leave. Nationwide opposition to membership and monetary union is higher.

Goran Persson, the Swedish Prime Minister, is maintaining a wait-and-see policy on EMU entry, but his Cabinet is split. Most outspoken is Carl Tham, the Education Minister, who dubs monetary union an "example of utopian social engineering of the worst possible kind". Coming from a Social Democrat whose party has tried since the 1920s to draw up

a utopian blueprint for Sweden, that is powerful criticism. Monetary union, he said, would lead to a rise in unemployment — already 13 per cent of the workforce — and to a "German Europe rather than a Europeanised Germany".

Unhappiness with Europe emerged only nine months after the referendum in European elections the anti-Brussels parties (the Greens and the Left) scooped 30 per cent of the vote while the ruling Social Democrats took a drubbing. Taking into account anti-European candidates, about one-half of Sweden's representatives in Strasbourg can be counted as hostile.

This was shrugged off as a protest vote but, if anything, the Eurosceptic constituency has grown since 1995. The reason is partly a sense of broken promises: Swedes had expected cheaper food, competitively priced cars and washing machines, more jobs and, above all, greater influence within the EU. Instead they perceive their country as in steep decline, and they blame Brussels.

The J P Morgan calculation — which places probabilities on EMU membership on the basis of financial market expectations — last month gave Sweden a 76 per cent chance of taking part in 1999's

single-currency project. Now it puts the chances at 64 per cent.

The heart of the problem is unemployment and its implications for the overstretched welfare state. Swedes were accustomed to unemployment rates of about 2 per cent, and the social web spun by successive governments was regarded as a model by the Left and Centre-Left throughout Western Europe, spawning a degree of Swedish arrogance. Yet the Swedish model was financed by heavy borrowing and European membership coincided with payback time. Public spending has been reined in, growth has slowed to a

crawl and jobs have melted like iceflakes in March.

It is all made far worse by the success of neighbouring Norway, which waited until after the Swedish referendum before casting its vote, calculating that Norwegians would follow by example. Instead there was a strong "No" vote and the threatened isolation and economic decline has not happened. Growth has been above 4 per cent for the past two years, and the country is one of the few (with Luxembourg) that could be sure this year of meeting all Maastricht entry criteria for monetary union.

North Sea oil is an important

factor, but non-petroleum sector investment has risen by some 30 per cent and the non-oil economy is growing at an annual rate of about 3 per cent. Unemployment is low at about 5 per cent of the workforce and falling.

Norway has benefited from its "shadow" EU membership. As a member of the European Economic Area it enjoys most of the trade benefits of full membership, but agriculture and fishing. Here Norwegians have used some Viking cunning — salmon farmers, for example, moving into Scotland so they can keep supplying their markets without import levy fears.

German protesters launch attacks to block nuclear train

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

GERMANY'S militant anti-nuclear activists are preparing for the country's biggest showdown on atomic waste by launching nationwide attacks on the railway network.

The point of the protests — which affected five stretches of railway line yesterday including the high-speed route to Frankfurt airport — is to highlight the role of trains in transporting six huge canisters of spent nuclear rods to a storage depot in northern Germany.

The nuclear transport is not due to begin until the end of the week, and the canisters should arrive at the heavily guarded storage centre in Gorleben, Lower Saxony, by next Wednesday. However, militant groups have already started a campaign of disruption. A train ticket centre has been attacked, protesters have seen away stretches of track, and yesterday grappling irons were used to drag down overhead lines.

A shipment of nuclear waste last year led to the planting of several small but potentially fatal bombs on mainline routes. Counter-terrorism experts fear an even more violent campaign in the coming days and say that militants have been systematically infiltrating the broadly peaceful anti-nuclear movement.

The mood has been made determined by the accidental

derailing of a nuclear shipment through eastern France earlier this month. Officials said there was no radiation leak, but protesters see the derailment as an example of the hazards of nuclear transport through Germany.

The six canisters heading for Gorleben will be monitored for radiation throughout the trip. About 20,000 police have been assigned to protect the waste, but no single policeman will spend more than two hours next to a canister lest they be affected by radiation.

Anti-nuclear groups have been distributing leaflets in and around police stations

Bonn tax cuts deal 'close'

Bonn: Germany's ruling coalition and the opposition Social Democrats were yesterday close to a possible deal to reduce company taxes as a way of achieving a compromise on broad reforms designed to combat record postwar unemployment, now running at 4.7 million. However, the day after rare face-to-face talks on sweeping tax reforms, both sides remained cautious over whether they could meet the Government's Easter deadline to agree tax cuts. (Reuters)

suggesting that proximity to the nuclear load will cause sterility. Not surprisingly, few policemen from outside Lower Saxony have been volunteering for escort duty.

The tactical goal of the protesters is to push up the costs of nuclear transport to such an extent that it no longer makes any financial sense. However, not all anti-nuclear campaigners believe this to be a sensible course.

Dr Michael Sailer of the Darmstadt Ecological Institute has warned the militants that their blockade will make recycling in Sellafield and France a more feasible financial alternative. That in turn would reinforce what he calls the "plutonium industry".

The civil disobedience campaign is certainly gathering force and the boundaries between violent and non-violent protest have become blurred. According to leaflets distributed in many German cities, the time had come for an "offensive against the infrastructure of the railways, electricity works and public buildings".

It was up to "each individual as to how to exercise his or her civil disobedience: by physically blocking the railway lines, removing sleepers, unscrewing bolts or sawing the tracks". As Germany has 25,000 miles of track, there should be no shortage of targets.



Models show off Pierre Cardin's fashions for next autumn and winter at Berlin's famous KaDeWe shopping centre. The centre is also staging a retrospective exhibition of the French designer's work.

Rifkind to set record clear on Milosevic

By MICHAEL BINNON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE three leaders of the main opposition parties in Serbia arrived in Britain last night for three days of talks at the Government's invitation. The meeting is intended to correct the impression in Serbia that Britain is an important

supporter of President Milosevic. Vuk Draskovic, the leader of the Serbian Renewal Movement, Zoran Djindjic of the Democratic Party, and Vesna Petic of the Civic Alliance of Serbia, will meet Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, this morning to brief him on the democracy movement and the Zajedno coalition's drive for electoral

reform and independent media. All three played key roles in the protests that forced Mr Milosevic to abandon his attempt to crush the opposition victories in local polls last month. The three men were invited to Britain last month. Mr Rifkind will want to know how much support they will give to the Dayton peace accords.

Algerian extremists murder bus passengers

By BEN MACINTYRE

ALGERIAN Islamic militants have murdered at least 29 civilians in the past two days after the most violent of the Muslim fundamentalist groups announced a fresh offensive in its campaign to topple the Government.

A group of 60 guerrillas ambushed two buses near the southern town of Sfid on Sunday night and murdered 17 unarmed passengers. "Seven passengers were shot dead before the eyes of the other travellers, and the remaining ten were dragged away to be killed by having their throats cut," al-Khabar newspaper reported.

On Monday night a radical Islamic group said it had carried out the assassination last month of Abdelhak Benhamouda, a trade union leader. In a pre-recorded interview on Algerian state television, Moujahed Rachid, the head of a rebel splinter group, said the country's top trade unionist had been assassinated to "prompt a crisis at government level".

Other extremists, however, are concentrating on terrorising the civilian population in an accelerating campaign of brutality. Over a 48-hour period, in addition to the Sfid massacre, four women and one man were shot dead in Algiers, five other people were abducted and then murdered, and two more were killed when a bomb exploded in the market at Boufarik, south of the capital.

In France, police hunting terrorists who bombed a commuter train in Paris on December 3 rounded up more than 200 people yesterday as the Interior Minister disclosed that fingerprints had been found on fragments of the bomb. Police believe the explosion, which killed four people and injured dozens, was the work of Algerian Islamic militants using a homemade bomb constructed out of a gas cylinder.

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Democrat donor has links to Beijing

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

FOR the first time, a donor in the fundraising scandal that is swamping President Clinton and the Democrats was shown yesterday to have an official link to the Chinese Communist Government.

Ng Lap Seng, a property developer in Macau, made a contribution of \$15,000 (£9,250) that has been called into question during a secret internal audit by the Democratic National Committee. So have dozens of political contributions from other donors, many of them Asians, that the committee is preparing to return this week — in addition to the \$15 million already sent back as tainted money.

Meanwhile, Mr Clinton rejected any suggestion that he had induced people to donate campaign funds by offering them overnight stays at the White House. "The Lincoln Bedroom was never sold," he said brusquely. Mr Ng serves on the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in the Chinese city of Canton. The body acts as a national advisory board to the Chinese Government and the Communist Party.

Tracked down by *The Washington Post*, Mr Ng acknowledged that his \$15,000 did not come from business funds raised in America, as required by law. Further, he said, other contributions by his business partner, Charles Yeh Lin Tse, a friend of Mr Clinton's, might also have come from Mr Ng's business interests in China, Hong Kong and Macau.

Both Mr Ng and Mr Tse were among the Asian entrepreneurs who set up shop in Little Rock, Arkansas, starting from Mr Clinton's time as Governor. Their operations are now under investigation by the Justice Department task force looking into allegations of illegal fundraising.

The task force was already pursuing a reported link to the Chinese Embassy in Washington for allegedly directing contributions to the Democrats from foreign sources — information said to have been gleaned from electronic eavesdropping by the US Government. China denied the account, and Mr Clinton said it would be a very serious matter if any country attempted to funnel funds into an American political party. Republicans are sharpening their knives in anticipation of congressional hearings which they promise will be devoted to exhaustive inquiries into the purported Chinese connection and other off-shore fundraising shenanigans by the Democrats.

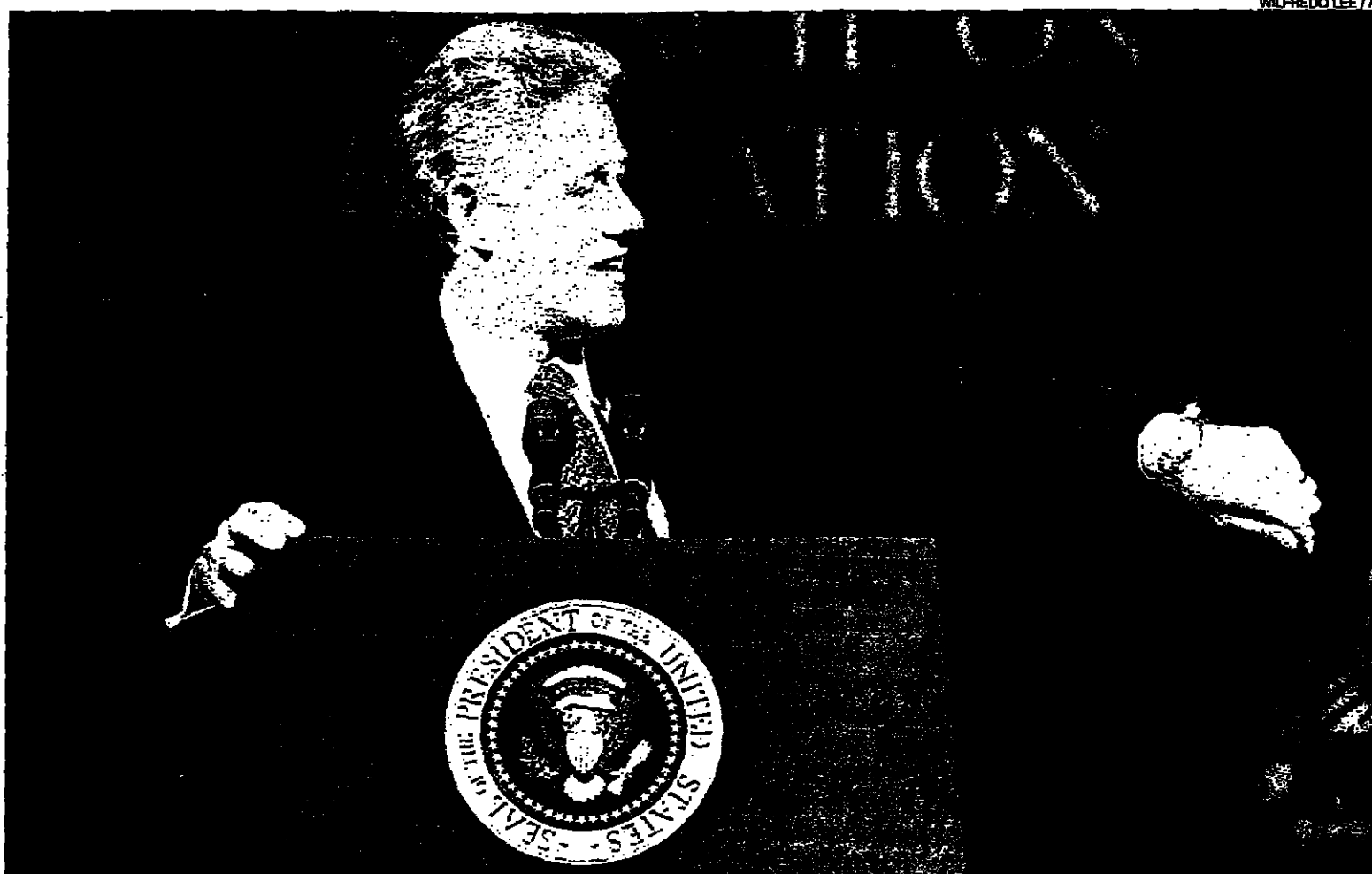
Mr Clinton's zeal for re-

warding big donors with an overnight stay at the White House was shown when he scribbled his enthusiastic approval on a memo proposing the idea from his campaign finance director, according to officials. The memo said the promise of a coffee meeting or bed-and-breakfast at the White House should be used as "motivators" to encourage heavy contributors to give again. No one has said how many snuggled under the sheets of the Lincoln Bedroom, having given as much as \$100,000 each, but they were thought to number in the dozens.

However, Mr Clinton said: "This is one more false story we have had to endure and the facts will show what the truth is." His aides were preparing to release a list of Mr Clinton's overnight guests to counter the allegation that invitations were an inducement to donors.

Mr Clinton is also trying hard to rebut suggestions that the foreign and domestic "fat-cat" contributors influenced government policy. All they got was a "respectful hearing"

about their concerns, but no guaranteed results, he said, a claim of innocence widely disbelieved by critics. As the scandal unfolds, Mr Clinton has attended a Washington fundraiser, his third since his inauguration last month. The event raised \$300,000 towards paying off the Democrats' election debts of close to \$10 million.



President Clinton made full disclosure of his latest gift, an \$18 watch, at a Washington education conference yesterday. But he was angered by suggestions that he traded overnight stays at the White House for campaign funds. "The Lincoln Bedroom was never sold," he said

Skyscraper gunman denounced Britain

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

THE supposedly apolitical gunman who sprayed bullets into tourists at the Empire State Building on Sunday died with an angry letter in his pocket that castigated Britain, France and the United States for their support of Israel.

Ali Abu Kamal, 69, who shot himself fatally in the head on the skyscraper's 80th-storey viewing platform, appeared to harbour a grudge against the "evil big three" — Western powers. The rambling letter, which was copied in English and Arabic, described them as anti-Palestinian.

It gave rise to suspicions that the shootings, in which one tourist died and six were hurt, may not have been as random as thought, nor motivated simply by Kamal's alleged loss of his life savings in an American investment. However, Howard Safir, New York's Police Commissioner, said he was continuing to view the incident as the work of a "deranged individual" rather than terrorism.

The skyscraper reopened to tourists yesterday. Metal detectors have now been placed at the entrance and security checks — an absence of which had led to criticism of the building's owners — have been introduced.

It was also reported yesterday that Kamal went to the building the day before the shooting to "case the joint". Nothing that visit and the letter found on his body, a police spokesman said: "It looks very much premeditated. He had a lot of grievances against a lot of people. He was mad at the US, France and Great Britain." The letter included a "charter of honour", listing enemies on whom Kamal wanted revenge.

Investigators hope to find out how the English teacher from the Gaza Strip managed to save so much money; some reports put the amount he lost on ill-guided investments at \$500,000 (£307,000).

Those who met Kamal in the days before the shooting described him as a wreck, smoking and drinking heavily, buying \$20 call-girls, eating like a hungry dog and scribbling mad messages on scraps of paper.

Warning on Gulf War gas risk 'lost'

Washington: Documents made public yesterday reveal that the CIA warned the Pentagon in 1991 that American troops may have been exposed to chemical weapons in the Gulf War, five years before Pentagon officials said they were aware of it. (Ian Brodie writes).

Only last year did the Pentagon acknowledge that more than 20,000 troops may have been exposed to nerve gas during the destruction of an Iraqi weapons dump known as Kamisayah. Previously, American commanders had insisted they did not believe troops were exposed to nerve gas because no soldiers became seriously ill or died during the 1991 war.

The Pentagon offered no explanation of how it "lost" the CIA's detailed warnings. The confusion is bound to add to the widespread belief among thousands of veterans suffering from Gulf War Syndrome that their health problems were not taken seriously and that possible causes were hushed up. The documents, and the Pentagon's admission of having overlooked them, offer no new clues to the mystery of whether chemical weapons might have been responsible for their ailments.

The issue will now be pursued by President Clinton's advisory committee on Gulf War veterans' illnesses.



General Gutiérrez: accused of being in pay of cartel

Mexico clears out anti-drugs agency

BY IAN BRODIE

MEXICO has sacked 35 people in its anti-narcotics agency who were all linked to General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, a top official under arrest for allegedly taking bribes from the head of the country's biggest cocaine cartel. The general faces court-martial, possibly for treason.

The clear-out, announced yesterday, appeared to be timed to try to salvage Mexico's drug-fighting reputation in Washington. President Clinton must decide this week whether Mexico is doing enough to combat drugs to qualify for continued American aid. Barry McCaffrey, the head of the White House anti-drugs office, said he chaired a

meeting of senior officials who seriously considered downgrading Mexico's rating as an ally in the drug fight.

The alleged betrayal by General Gutiérrez is believed to have compromised much of America's war on drugs along the Mexican border. Washington had briefed the general about informants, operations and satellite surveillance of the drug runners who smuggle two-thirds of the cocaine into the United States through Mexico from Colombia and elsewhere.

However, the United States might still give Mexico qualified approval on the grounds of its own national interests, Mr McCaffrey said.

Final big deal ends broker's record run

BY QUENTIN LETTS

THE world's oldest capitalist is dead. Jacques Coe, a 103-year-old stockbroker who remained active on the "marvellous game" of Wall Street until his last days, died in a Florida hospital "well ahead".

Mr Coe, who started work as a securities house messenger boy in New York in 1907 and who saw enough market wobbles to make him calm in the severest bout of profit taking, retained an impressive portfolio of private clients until the end. Most of them were rich widows whose husbands Mr Coe had known and outlived.

Joseph Cohen, chairman of the Wall Street firm Cowen & Company, where Mr Coe worked for the past 30 years, said yesterday: "He was a consummate salesman with a high level of integrity. An interesting guy."

He was the oldest active stockbroker in the United States and, it is believed, in the world. Only when his children stopped him travelling after his 100th birthday did he cease making annual trips to London for a lunch at the City firm of Singer and Friedlander and to catch up on market intelligence.

Mr Cohen said that in the current runaway New York stock market Mr Coe, who worked from home for the past three years, was "beastly". He started work just after a major Dow Jones index "readjustment" and founded his own company in 1926 — three years before the disastrous crash of 1929.

Mr Coe was luckier and shrewder than most and ended 1929 with a profit. Having survived that catastrophe, he tended to take a relaxed view of later crises.

He is credited with inventing, more than 80 years ago, the use of technical analysis of companies and investment trends. Most days he smoked a cigar — washed down by a stiff vodka — and up to his death he was full of schemes about how to "make a turn".

Cowen & Company has a reputation for longevity. Now that Mr Coe is gone, the title of senior professional at the firm passes to Irving Sherman, 92, who goes into the office every day and is said to be keenly competitive with brokers a fraction of his age.

Russia sidesteps US controls

BY IAN BRODIE

RUSSIA'S nuclear-weapons establishment was reported yesterday to have evaded United States export controls and obtained a powerful IBM supercomputer through a European middleman.

The Russians said they plan to use the IBM RS/6000 SP to simulate nuclear tests, but the Americans say such supercomputers, which are capable of performing ten billion calculations a second, could help Russia to design new arms.

The American restrictions and the Russians' success in getting round them show how edgy relations remain between the former Cold War

enemies over the nuclear-weapons issue. The Russians insist that they need supercomputers to verify the reliability of their nuclear stockpile, now that they have agreed to halt nuclear testing.

Russian officials refused to say precisely who sold them the computer but they did not hesitate to publicise the acquisition, perhaps calculating that they might undermine Washington's rationale for continued restrictions, according to *The New York Times*. "If we see something we can buy on the European market, we

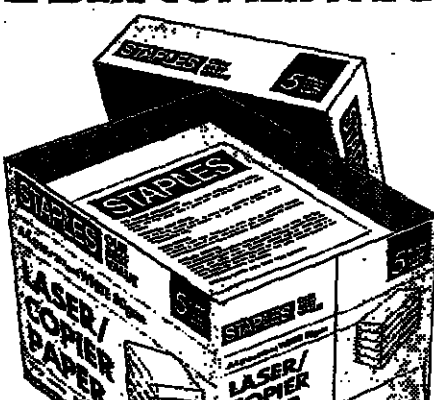
buy it," Vladislav Petrov, the head of Public Affairs for the Russian Ministry of Atomic Energy Affairs, said. He said the computer was bought for \$7 million (£4.2 million).

Under US law, American computer manufacturers are still required to obtain Washington's permission to sell their most powerful models to Russia. Last year the Clinton Administration turned down requests from both IBM and Hewlett-Packard to sell supercomputers to Moscow, amid suspicions that they would be sent to nuclear weapons design centres.

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Milliners for the millennium



A new generation of hat makers is learning to combine fantasy with high street business skills. Iain R. Webb reports

Tonight at the Hippodrome nightclub in the West End, Philip Treacy, the celebrated milliner of the smart young set, will unveil his collection for autumn/winter 1997. These will be no ordinary hats. Treacy, who graduated from the Royal College of Art in 1990 in a blaze of glory, has built his reputation on the fantastic and flamboyant — one of his favourite creations is a scale model of an Elizabethan galleon.

Treacy's show, which will be one of the highlights of London Fashion Week, is sponsored by Debenhams, the chain store, for whom he creates a range of more wearable, special-occasion hats. The association reflects the awareness of young designers to put business before hedonistic pleasures.

Meanwhile, at the Royal College of Art, the latest crop of students have been working with Kangol, the international headwear company whose hats are worn by everyone from Willie Nelson to Linford Christie, on a project that mirrors the link between Treacy and Debenhams.

Last October first-year students were taken to Linton for a tour of the company's factory. They met the milliner Graham Smith, who, aside from his own private clients who include Jemima Khan and Cosima Von Bulow, is also Kangol's international consultant design director. To encourage the students to produce interesting, yet wearable designs, Smith devised a project to create wedding hats for four specific categories: traditional town wedding, tra-

ditional country wedding, second marriage and media wedding. The best four were to be sold at Harrods. Smith says: "It took me ten years to get the hang of the factory. You have to learn to adapt the styles because there are so many technical processes which limit your ideas even before you start — like how high the crown of a hat can be because it has to be able to go through a certain machine."

John Strutton, production director at Kangol, was impressed by the standard: "There are several styles, like the turquoise topper, which Kangol could easily put

straight into production. They would be best sellers." Treacy Whewell, the Harrods millinery buyer, says: "The most elegant and simple hats were the most successful. It's not just about creating applause on a catwalk." Maria O'Regan, millinery tutor at the RCA, says: "The students realise this will be the kind of work that will pay their bills. They won't all be able to be Philip Treacy."

© Iain R. Webb is fashion director of Elle magazine. The hats designed by the RCA students for Kangol are being exhibited at the RCA, Kensington Gore, SW7, on March 26.



ABOVE: Second Wedding: turquoise topper with organza trim and quilts designed by DAGMARA CHILDS, £89.95. Powder blue jacket, £229; matching skirt, £219; Tomasz Starzewski. TOP LEFT: Media Wedding: navy and burgundy hat with rosette and organza trim designed by KAREN SCOTT, £119. Navy strappy dress, £589; Amanda Wakeley. BELOW LEFT: Town Wedding: Cream boater with black sculptured straw trim designed by ABDI KANIEZ, £80. Navy shift dress, £259; Jenny Packham. BELOW RIGHT: Country Wedding: Brown flat fronted hat trimmed with berries and flowers designed by DAGMARA CHILDS, £129. Pale taupe strappy dress, £789; Helen David — English Eccentrics. Photographs by IAIN R. WEBB. Make-up by Mandy Winrow using Kanebo's new spring colours. Hair by Mandy Winrow. Model: Erin. All hats and clothes available from Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1. Silk flowers from a selection at Novelty Flowers.

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I would take more exercise, but it goes against nature

The latest health campaign tells us nothing we don't know

Everyone is so cynical nowadays, so intent on seeing the worst and ridiculing the best, that I feel we should be grateful for those government bodies still isolated in their optimism about man's perfectibility and their idealistic belief in our better nature.

This was perfectly illustrated yesterday by a patient, courteously conducted argument on the Today programme between Auberon Waugh and a man from the Health Education Authority, which this week launches a £9 million campaign to get people over 50 to take a little daily exercise.

As part of this well-intentioned campaign, posters, leaflets and advertisements are being called in to service to inform everyone that exercise exists and it is good for you. Waugh suggested that by the time people were 50, they knew these things. It's hard to disagree. The reasonable person would presume that those who fail to take exercise are not those who lack the information about it but, rather, the desire, energy or willpower to do it.

Not so the man from the HEA. For him the lazy slob is merely unenlightened and the elderly couch potato a victim of poor education: funny how all propagandists share the way they look at the world, even if the world view itself may alter. For such people, bad choices must always be ill-informed choices.

And if gentle encouragement fails, the HEA is ready with some severe stories about elderly people "so unfit they struggle to wash their hair", about old people "marooned on their sofas long after the television has flickered into doleful blackness." Once they had switched off the television, a quarter of older women did not have enough strength in their legs to get out of a chair without using their arms.

Am I missing something? Am I being insensitive about the trials of old age? But I truly can't see that needing to use your arms to get out of a sofa or chair late at night is a sign of worrying decrepitude in the elderly population. I certainly hope it isn't, because I can't be sure that I don't winch myself off of the sofa as I drag myself off to bed at night, and I am about half the age of the HEA's target group.

I am sure that the health of the elderly population isn't all it could be. I am furthermore convinced that £9 million could go a great way to improve it. Poverty remains the greatest cause of ill-health among most people, and the impoverished elderly who live in cold, damp rooms which they can ill-afford to heat might well appreciate a slight redirection of funds. (And I wonder how many more old people might take up the suggestion to walk to the shops if they weren't afraid of being in the streets in the first place.)

Even from another, radically opposed perspective the one that says, correct-

ly, that we live longer, healthier lives than ever before—the exercise initiative is a wasteful one. But anyway, regardless of ideology, I am not sure that it ever pays to lecture to people.

This exercise campaign is no different in essence from the healthy eating campaigns that we've seen regularly. If there is anyone out there who really doesn't know that a healthy diet is one that includes fruit and vegetables, then nothing any of us says now is going to make any difference. I think it qualifies as "invincible ignorance".

Everyone knows that living on sweet biscuits and fried bread is not exactly good for you; people eat sugary, fatty, fried food because they like the taste and because it's comforting and bolstering and warming. They know better, they just don't eat better. The same is true of exercise: we all know that it's good for us; it's just that "do it, it's good for you" remains one



Nigel Lawson

of the least compelling injunctions.

I am not actually an anti-exercise fanatic. I think that it is extraordinary how much better exercise makes one feel, and not so much physically as mentally. The only thing is, I can never quite remember that in advance. In advance, all I can summon up is a resentful, slothful dread. Walking is probably the answer: ordinary, brisk, everyday walking. But again, much as I know it'll put a spring in my step, give me better ideas and — one hopes — better legs, none of this knowledge necessarily propels me out of doors on a blustery morning.

But this distinction to exercise is when you come to think about it entirely as it should be. Any exercise taken for "health" is, strictly speaking, unnecessary exercise. From a Darwinian point of view we are surely programmed thus to shun it. Whatever current notions are of health, fitness, the body beautiful, our instincts must be to conserve energy not to expend it unnecessarily. Jumping up and down in a gym or wheeling for stationary miles on an exercise bike goes against nature.

The survival of the fittest does not, after all, refer to those who spend longest at the gym, however many attempts there are to persuade us that he who is fittest lives longer.



The Spice Girls, winners of two Britpop awards at Earls Court, predictably threatened to fall out of their frocks and flashed their underwear

Pass the cocoa, Liam

It is no easy task, as Lorelei Lee might have put it, for a Girl Like I to find herself instructed to go and write about the Brit Awards. For a start, I had, before Monday, only the vaguest notion of what a Brit Award might be.

For a child of the Sixties and Seventies, I grew up in almost complete ignorance of pop music. For ages we didn't own a telly, and then, when one did arrive, the prospect of sitting in front of it, watching Top of the Pops in the silent, disapproving presence of my father was a prospect too painful to contemplate.

The onset of boyfriends brought with it a crash course in contemporary music: a short, shaming flirtation with Steeleye Span, rapidly abandoned in favour of the sultry beauties with attitude so beloved of the Old Grey Whistle Test. But then along came motherhood, and my brief

The curiously respectable truth behind a night of legendary glamour and excess at the Britpop awards

Patsy Kensit looked distinctly chilly in a couple of strips of black cloth, held together across her exposed front with a little bit of string. The most consoling thing was a picture of Paula Yates looking exhausted, clearly suffering from the perennial mothers' problem of being unable to keep one's eyes open after 10.30, who had the brilliant wheeze of turning up in tights and nightie, presumably in order to be able to pop straight into bed on returning home.

Immensely cheered by this, I settled at last on a diaphanous silk chiffon shift from Betty Jackson which, I thought, neatly combined sexiness with practicality — fully hand-washable, should I run into some 1997 reincarnation of Sid Vicious, and with plenty of room for a nice warm vest underneath. Thus clad, I followed in the Footsteps of the Stars, past the massed ranks of rain-soaked photographers at Earls Court, and



JANE SHILLING GETS DRESSED

There, indeed, my luck seemed to have changed. I found myself standing next to a fragrant vision, reeking of Giorgio, with a yard-long pigtail and a six-o'clock shadow that shaded into a complexion of Estée Lauder's finest rose-petal, who appointed himself my guide for the evening. Look, he said, there are Ant and Dec. Now that one up on the stage stuffing herself back into her frock is Sexy Spice. Oooh yes, there she was, hitching up her strapless red sequined ball-gown with that thumbs-in-the-armpits gesture so beloved of 1950s debutantes. And next to her

was Scary Spice, looking, well, scary, in a floral negligée and Nana Mouskouri revival specs. The Spice Girls showed their knickers and fell

out of their frocks, and Mark Morrison surrounded himself with stripping policemen and thug from Manic Street Preachers dedicated his award to comprehensive schools everywhere but somehow the rain outside seemed to have seeped into the proceedings.

The party spirit wasn't exactly encouraged by the mandatory competing presence of Ben Elton, who these days, with his shorn head and glittering eye, resembles one of the more alarming Old Testament prophets, and who had clearly been warned, after last

year's excesses, to Keep A Grip on Things.

Halfway through the show he launched into a terrifying lecture on the evils of drink which put a firm lid on any frenzied bacchanale anyone might have been planning. Skunk Anansie's PVC-clad backing dancers mimed sex on stage; the Artist Formerly Known As Prince (now to be addressed simply as The Artist) hopped gamely about in his elevator heels — but all in vain. We in the cheap seats screamed politely as required and otherwise sat with our hands tidily in our laps. Up in the stalls, a foot tapped.

The atmosphere was what you might expect from a Clarence Rattigan matinee in Cheltenham. As the Bee Gees doddered into a routine carefully choreographed so as not to disarrange their remaining hairs, I made for the exit and the suddenly rather racy-seeming prospect of a nice cup of cocoa and a rousing chorus of The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round.



Networking — Lisa Marie



Posing — Gina G



Legging it — Tisi

Elton had clearly been told to Keep A Grip on Things

took my seat for a night of legendary glamour and excess.

Except that, looking around, it all seemed curiously respectable. Acres and acres of record industry chaps — in near Armani suits and strenuously witty ties, and women draped from neck to knee in dreadfully understated Jean Muir-style black-viscose-crepe-with-a-discreet-sparkle. Somehow, the chances of anything louche happening seemed remote.

As a bossy man with a microphone told us all to sit down, a certain air of school outing began to pervade the proceedings. So far, the nearest thing to outrageous behaviour was the table manners of the tabloid showbiz hack to my left. Don't snatch, said I. Use your knife, not your fingers. If you want the bread, just ask. Don't lean across people like that. Dear oh dear, I get plenty of this kind of thing at home. Perhaps something more exciting would be going on among the hordes of rent-an-adolescent Young People milling sedately about below the stage.

A glance through the pictures from last year was, frankly, not much help. Michael Jackson and Liam Gallagher attended wearing, respectively, white satin pyjamas and a football manager's sheepskin car coat. If Liam looked a shade warmly dressed for the occasion ("Take it off, do," I fear I should have found myself saying, had I encountered him, "or you won't feel the benefit when you get outside"),

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A story of heroism that never died

Fifty-three years ago, as the Red Army hammered at the gates of Budapest and pro-Nazi death squads roamed the Hungarian capital, a Jewish couple appealed to a neutral Swedish diplomat for help. The woman was about to give birth, but no hospital would admit her. The Swede offered the use of his flat and slept in the corridor while a baby girl was born.

That "baby" is today Yvonne Singer, now a middle-aged mother of three, who will be presented to the Queen after the monarch unveils a monument in London's Great Cumberland Place to honour Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who saved scores of thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust.

For London, the unveiling will be a highly unusual event — a neutral Swede joining the ranks of British heroes such as Wellington, Nelson and Churchill. Wallenberg, who was swallowed up by the Soviet prison system after his life-saving exploits in Budapest, earns his place as a universal symbol of individual resistance to the two great tyrannies of

John Bierman on London's tribute to a man who defied the Nazis

the 20th century — Nazism and communism. But for Mrs Singer, the unveiling has special significance. It was her parents, Tibor and Agnes Vandro, to whom Wallenberg loaned his flat in 1944. After the war, the Vandro emigrated to Canada and tried to bury the secret of their origins. They brought Yvonne up as a Christian and tried to discourage her when she fell in love with a Jew. But she defied them and "converted" to marry him, only to discover the truth about her origins when she read a 1981 biography of Wallenberg. Today she and her husband are lecturers at Toronto's York University.

"It's a wonderful thing that at last Raoul Wallenberg is being given the honour he deserves," she said yesterday. "But what a cruel irony that having saved so many, nobody saved him. I hope, this

event will push the Russians into disclosing what really happened to him." Apparently suspecting that he was a capitalist spy, the Russians took Wallenberg to Moscow for questioning when Budapest fell to the Red Army in 1945. After denying that he was in their hands, in 1957 the Russians claimed that he had died of a heart attack in prison.

But fellow prisoners suggested that Wallenberg was alive at least into the late 1970s. His family believes that he may still be alive, aged 84, in the Gulag, the victim of a cover-up or a colossal bureaucratic bung. That is why the Wallenberg statue is being called a monument and not a memorial.

The only members of his immediate family still alive are his half-siblings, Nina Lagergren and Guy von Dardel. Both will be present at the unveiling.

The Wallenberg monument shows the Swede against an lift wall of 100,000 "schuttpasses" — the bogus Swedish passports which he issued to Jews under threat of deportation to death camps.

John Bierman is author of the Wallenberg biography *Righteous Gentle* (Penguin Books).

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Alan Coren



History repeats itself: the first time as sitcom, the second time as farce

I cannot describe how queer it feels, this morning, to think that even as my own pen trembles above the impetuous paper, desperately seeking the right words for an exceedingly tricky situation, HM the Queen's might, a mere five miles south of mine, be doing the very same. I see her, now staring at the page before her on the desk, now staring at the drizzled garden beyond, just as I am doing, gnawing the lip, racking the brain, and reaching yet again for the gurgling percolator beside her in the earnest hope that another jolt of caffeine might do the trick.

My own earnest hope is that it will not. Because I want, when I find them, to get my words in first. I want my gracious Sovereign still to be sitting there, undecided, when, tomorrow, this column hits the streets, on the offchance that at least one of its readers might have access to at least one of her ears. Because I want to put words in her pen, before it is too late. I want it to deny assent to the Duke of York's request to allow his ex-Duchess to move back under his Sunninghill roof. I want it to explain that if the Queen did assent, then all three of them would need their heads examined. And I want it to tack on a salutary, albeit Mordant, PS, recalling history's habit, when repeating itself, of appearing the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.

Or, rather, in this case, the first time as soap opera, the second as sitcom. For that is inevitably what would happen should Sarah return, bag and baggage, to what was once dubbed Southport, by wags who saw the Lego eyesore and the marital shenanigans that went on, within it and without, as "Dallas By Appointment", serial hogwash in which the tabloid public could stooge itself, episode by preposterous episode, until the plot finally ran out of steam, and the end credits rolled.

And how we cheered when they did, and hugged ourselves, and waved our scarves, and threw our hats in the air! Had there been a pitch to run onto, we should have run onto it, because we thought it was all over. And so it seemed to be, until last weekend, when the horrifying news broke of the couple's request that the Queen allow them once more to share the same little nest, albeit in separate wings. Horrifying, since, should she consent, it will not be Southport this time around, it will be Erzurum, because it will no longer be *Dallas*, it will be *My Wife Next Door*, it will be *Three's Company*, it will be any one of those umpteen dire sitcoms with just one sit and no com whatever which have for so long blighted our screens with such nudge and snigger as can be wrung from nothing more than the close proximity of exes.

Can you not taste the manna as it falls into the begging bowls of hack and paparazzi? Can you not see them creeping Berkshire's ditches, dangling in its trees, poking lenses through its knot-holes, dialling cellphones from its shrubs, waving chequebooks at its tradesfolk? Do you, immersed as you have all been in the tease and innuendo of the are-they-or-aren't-they genre, not know what you would be in for? Oh, look, here is an *intra-red snap* of a man tiptoeing a midnight lawn, who might it be, are those pyjamas, is that champagne, oh, cock an ear, was that a joint giggle from one upstairs window, or merely two separate giggles from two different windows, or, hold on, might it have been two separate joint ones, the public has the right to know, let us offer that gas inspector a nice new Toyota, let us send that daily on a sunsoaked bend-down fortnight, let us find a big blonde for that postman, hang about, gimme them binoculars, see that washing-line, I swear those are navy-issue Y-fronts hanging next to that bra, hold the front page, "Big Flap on at Sunninghill", I like it, no wait, stone me, that's him going round there with a cup, he's only run out of sugar, hasn't he, gimme that camera, remake the front page, "Andy Still Sweet on Fergie, Could it be Tea for Two?", I love it...

And there, I fear, space compels me to leave it: though, Lord knows, there are many more words to find, I must perforce lay down my pen. Praying that when Her Majesty comes to lay down hers, mine will not have been taken up in vain.



SWAMPY RETURNS

Peter Brookes

Burying the family silver

Talk of privatising the Underground is a mistake — the Government will always have to pay for it in the end

The battle lines are emerging from the fog. At the election, a radical reformist party will confront a deeply conservative one. A party almost reckless in its zeal for change will oppose a party that feels the nation is bruised enough and needs a rest. The radical (or Conservative) party is in government. The conservative (or Labour) party is in opposition.

This paradox was on vivid display yesterday as the Cabinet announced that it wants to "privatise" London's Underground. The use of the word is eccentric. Selling trading companies such as British Steel, the Naafi or the Stationery Office to sink or swim in the competitive sector is one thing. Such activities were inappropriate for government and should never darken Whitehall again.

Selling the assets of a monopoly public service is different. In theory it is a perverse political act, denying taxpayers the long-term yield on assets built up at their expense. Such privatisation has become fashionable for two reasons: a Treasury that cannot handle productive investment and ministers who cannot run a wheel without falling foul of the unions or their own ambition. (Michael Howard's attempts to run prisons are hilariously documented this week by his sacked official, Derek Lewis). The only way to be free of such plagues, say the privatisers, is to sell the assets to someone else.

You can sell assets, but you cannot sell politics. British Gas or Railtrack may strut in the City as private companies, but their true chairmen are the regulators. Last year the Ofgas director, Clare Spottiswoode, announced the British Gas five-year distribution plan. She, not the company's chairman, fixed its permitted rate of return, its capital spending and its charges. She had the company bound and gagged. She also cut gas prices, shifting roughly a pound a week from the pockets of shareholders to those of gas consumers. She is not accountable to anyone.

There is nothing new in the abuse of public utilities. In the 1980s, Lord Lawson treated the gas and electricity industries in the same way. He raised energy prices and used the profit to cut income tax. He called it a "negative external finance limit" and the industries howled. It was classic asset-stripping. Tony Blair intends to do the same. He calls it a utilities windfall tax. The fact is, a monopoly is a monopoly is a monopoly. As Marx said, everybody

would like one, including politicians. There is nothing new under the sun. As far as I can see, London Underground "after privatisation" will be as nationalised as before. The Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, yesterday insisted that nothing would change through-ticketing, station interchanges, travelcards, concessionary fares and safety standards will all be determined by a central government regulator, as will fares. What this shadowy individual will have to do with the Tube's much-abused investment programme is unclear. Sir George has negotiated a novel deal with the Treasury. Under it, the proceeds from privatisation will not go into general revenue, but back to the company to pay for modernisation.

This is the programme that last month the same Treasury cut. Some £700 million which Labour says it would borrow from the City (making it public borrowing) would, under the Tories, be redefined as non-public. The gambit is that rather than get interest for its money, the City would be given an entire Underground. Rather than underwrite a gilt-edged investment in an existing asset, the Treasury is prepared to give the asset free to anyone who will improve it. I cannot work out if this short-termism is ingenuity or sophistry. It must be the greatest "sale of family silver" of all time.

When this £700 million has been used up, the new private Underground company (or companies) will of course return to the Government to ask for more. There is no way for the private sector to find the billions needed for the overdue cross-London and north-south relief tunnels: the only way to end overcrowding on the Tube. There is no mystery to this. The story of Britain's private railways was always one of property development. New lines were financed by appreciating land assets. When they ran out of suburbs to exploit,

the buccaneering underground companies in London simply demanded government money to finance further expansion. In 1933 they became the first nationalised industry. The London Passenger Transport Board was a public company, but it still had private shareholders who received dividends. Yet still it could not finance its investment. By the outbreak of war, the public company was bankrupt, saved from receivership only by re-nationalisation.

No government will risk the financial collapse of the London Tube. Sir George's company will be private only in name and constitution. It will act as a *de facto* management subcontractor to his department. This is what happens in London Underground today. The company's revenue, and thus its profit, will be secure, fixed by the annual fares negotiation. London's infrastructure will ultimately remain at the mercy of the Treasury. Nothing substantive will change.

Instead, the benefits of yesterday's decision must lie elsewhere, in whether a new board can find the efficiency savings to cover dividends and the higher cost of borrowing (above the government grant). To sceptics, utilities privatisation has become mostly an exercise in one-off labour-cost reduction. Staff are sacked, the share price rises and the monopolists settle down to "sweeten the franchise". This model predicts that the service degenerates to the point where politics forces the government to intervene.

The risk of this is the greater if, as with British Rail, the monopoly is split horizontally between operators and the owner of the track and property. The operator has no incentive to make long-term investments, while the track owner has no contact with the customer. Connoisseurs of dud privatisations should study the past week on the

Waterloo to Bournemouth line. The private operator, South-West Trains, was casually sweating its franchise by laying off drivers. Railtrack was casually mending its rails during Monday's rush hour.

We are becoming wiser in the behaviour of "privatised" monopolies. These are not private, competitive or risky industries in which companies go bankrupt and directors lose their jobs. They are "parasitical" monopolies. Government can franchise bits of them and inject elements of competition. The private entrepreneur's role can effect a swinging efficiency-drive and sell out or cash his options. The government can struggle to control him by regulation. Investment can be redefined as off-public-sector. But everybody (except the Treasury) knows that it is as secure as gilt-edged. The security is a public service revenue flow — and the fact that no government will ever let the service go bankrupt.

It is not privatisation that has been updated under John Major but nationalisation. This is no bad thing. Neoliberalisation is an advance on its predecessor. The performance of most British utilities is vastly better than two decades ago, and vastly better than their continental counterparts. If the sceptics are right and this is due to a one-off cut in labour costs, so be it. Corporatism in Germany has yet to find a better way of modernising its public services. Neoliberalisation puts a new energy into public companies. Or, as the late Nicholas Ridley said, "Utilities which we have privatised are more easily controlled than when they are in the public sector."

If Whitehall dogma requires that the Underground can be modernised only extravagantly, then there is no alternative. Labour's proposal to let it borrow in the City is unlikely to beat the dogma. Where successive Tory Chancellors and transport ministers have failed, Gordon Brown will not succeed. The Underground is so unloved in Whitehall that it must change its corporate stance if it is to achieve even modest progress. But that is just a beginning. When the fire-sale is over and the £700 million spent, we shall be back to 1933. The begging-bowl will be out. As long as central government refuses to let Londoners pay for a new Tube network themselves, taxpayers at large will have to foot the bill. This may seem unfair. But that is what we mean by nationalisation.

Simon Jenkins

Euro warmer

TEMPERATURE-SENSITIVE underpants for all schoolchildren is the aim of Eluned Morgan, 30, the Labour MEP for Mid and West Wales. Presenting a report by the European Parliament this week, Miss Morgan will say that hauling on electronic underwear could become as much a part of the schoolchild's morning routine as porridge and satchel packing. The theory is that by responding to temperature controls in the classroom, the pants can ensure that pupils are at their most

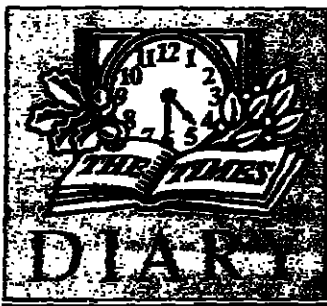
comfortable and ready to learn. Tired of being beaten round the head with square bananas and oblong sausages, the European Parliament has decided that honesty is the best policy, so it has pushed its underpants case up to the front in what is a broader report on how best to use modern technologies in the classroom. Miss Morgan believes that technology is now so advanced that children need never fall asleep again.

Aside from the obvious risks of electrocution below decks, Miss Morgan is optimistic about her hot-pants for all scheme. "The future of information technology is fraught with many dangers," she says, "but also offers fantastic opportunities." I warn to her.

Family seats

THERE was an endearing moment in the Commons yesterday as a father asked his own son a question. Aside from the hand-wringing interventions of Peter Bottomley when his wife Virginia is taking questions, such family moments are rare in the House.

Sir David Mitchell, the MP for Hampshire North-West, rose to



consult Andrew Mitchell, the MP for Gedling, and a junior social security minister, opening his question with the line: "Would my honourable and filial friend ..."

New fancies

AN autographed manuscript of what may well be Robert Browning's last poem has cropped up and will be sold by Phillips in London next month. A meditation on the transience of life and the presence of death — Browning was not the man to go for a drink and a flirty joke — it was found in his blotter after his death in 1889 at the Palazzo Rezzonico in Venice. Until now Browning's last poem was considered to be *Asolando: Fancies and Fads*.

This latest text is a rendering of an "Inscription on an Ancient Sarcophagus at Newquay, Cornwall"

Sun's light is come. To each Christ's Cross in shade, doth teach — 'tis come, thine Hour! Night brings shade. Going hence in shade — here evidence — 'tis gone, thine Hour!

Distractions

RIDING up the Mall in her Irish State Coach yesterday, the Queen seemed to be having difficulty concentrating on her guest beside her, President Weizman of Israel. She spent much of the journey looking concernedly over his shoulder at two dark-suited men passing in

pursuit of her wagon. Accustomed to more discreet modes of protection, she seemed both intrigued by and worried for the health of Weizman's goons. "These things are up to the country concerned," said a reserved spokesman for the Diplomatic Protection Group.

• The race for Reigate, probably the last vacant Tory seat before the election, ungraciously left vacant by Sir George Gardiner, is down to three. Tony Favell, Chris Butler, both former MPs, and PHS's choice, Malcolm Rifkind's crisply suited special adviser, Crispin Blunt.

In your eyes

THAT FINE actress Gina "Latin Legs" Lollobrigida has accepted Fidel Castro's invitation to Cuba for the 30th anniversary banquet in Havana of the Cohiba cigar — but she intends to have a food taster in tow. This is to settle a score. Lollobrigida is an old friend of Castro, who visited her recently at her house in Rome. To her fury, the Cuban dictator turned up for the private dinner with bomb-sniffing hounds, hairy-palmed bodyguards... and a food taster. Much hand-waving and pot-lifting ensued, Signora Lollobrigida's resident cook was outraged by this slur on his pasta-cooking



Gina Lollobrigida

abilities, and it took hours of silt-tact from the film actress before he would return to his stoves after Castro left.

• Users of the 123 Laundrette in London W9 are to have their own artist in residence, courtesy of the avant-garde Serpentine Gallery in Hyde Park. Sarah Cole, who photographs bras, will be holding workshops about the laundrette as a community resource for people without washing machines.

The Good Samaritan of Sweden

Wallenberg wasn't alone, says Michael Pinto-Duschinsky

When the Queen unveils the Raoul Wallenberg statue today in London's West End, it will be an appropriate memorial to a man who saved tens of thousands of lives. Aged only 32, he spent the last six months of his free life in Budapest on a mission to rescue its 200,000 Jews from the clutches of Adolf Eichmann and his Hungarian Nazi associates.

Wallenberg was able to enter Budapest on July 9, 1944, as a temporary Swedish diplomat, because his country was neutral in the war. By then 430,000 Hungarian Jews had been deported to Auschwitz in a mere eight weeks. Only the Jews of the capital remained. Six months later, when they captured the city, the Soviet forces found 100,000 of Budapest's Jews alive. Many owed their lives to Wallenberg's efforts. It is to him that I probably owe my own life.

On January 17, 1945, days after the liberation, Wallenberg was summoned to meet the Soviet authorities and disappeared. The Russians have still not explained exactly how and when he died. Yet the unveiling ceremony could help to perpetuate a number of other illusions about his life. It will bring to the fore a vital question: if a single diplomat like Wallenberg could save so many, why did the Allies do so little? Why did they refuse even to bomb the railway lines to Auschwitz or to attack the Auschwitz crematoria? The accusation is summed up at Washington's Holocaust Memorial Museum. There, a single letter of August 1944 rejecting the bombing of Auschwitz is on display: it bears the signature of John McCloy, assistant secretary of the US Army.

In isolation, this document is misleading. It was the American President who in June 1944 played the decisive role in stopping the flow of Jewish deportations from Hungary. Had Roosevelt not acted two weeks before Wallenberg arrived in Budapest, there would have been no Jews left for him to rescue. Only on June 24, 1944 did the first thorough evidence reach Washington that the deported Jews were being gassed at Auschwitz. The reaction in Washington was immediate and effective. Within two days, the Hungarian Regent, Admiral Horthy, received an ultimatum. The Americans undertook to bomb Budapest unless the deportations were halted. That very day, June 26, Horthy ordered the deportations of Budapest's Jews, scheduled for July 5, to be cancelled. British and American bombing raids over Budapest on June 29 and July 2 despatched the Hungarian leader's conviction that the Allies were in earnest. Eichmann was expelled from Budapest.

Though the British and American Air Forces later turned down the proposed bombing of the Auschwitz crematoria (a decision open to criticism), the threat to bomb Budapest had achieved the most important humanitarian objective — stopping deportations from the city.

For the next three months, Budapest's Jews were spared. But as the Russian forces approached, Hitler made a renewed effort to complete his Final Solution. An operation by SS Major Otto Skorzeny deposed Horthy, and installed a hooligan government of Hungarian Nazis. Eichmann returned to Budapest in October 1944. During these final weeks, deportation trains and gas chambers were no longer available, so death marches, drownings and shootings were instigated. Together with the Swiss diplomat Charles Lutz and Angelo Rotta, the Papal Nuncio, Wallenberg now carried out the exploits for which he is being commemorated. But the action of the Allies should not be forgotten. Few who owe his life to Wallenberg, Lutz or Rotta owe it equally to Skorzeny.

Today's ceremonies may foster another illusion. The presence of ambassadors and dignitaries from Germany and Hungary, welcome as an act of reconciliation, should not blind us to the shabby way their Governments continue to treat the Jews whom Wallenberg saved. Few of the willing executioners who served in the German legation in Budapest or in the SS in 1944 were punished. Many continued their diplomatic careers. The SS police chief in Hungary, Otto Winkelmann, and the SS spy-master, Wilhelm Hoettl, were rehabilitated. Skorzeny "escaped" an Allied custody, worked under CIA patronage for the Egyptian secret services, and ended by purchasing an estate in County Kildare. The head of the German legation in Budapest, Dr Veesenmayer, served less than three years of his 20-year sentence. Reporting from Landsberg Prison to Professor MacCartney, a fellow of All Souls, he asserted the destruction of Hungary's Jews "was not a matter of black or white"; the tasks of 1944 had had the aim of creating a "United Europe".

By contrast, the surviving victims have found it almost impossible to obtain recompense. Now in their seventies and eighties, some live in poverty in Hungary. Various legal technicalities have blocked claims by former slave labourers against German concerns which acted as slave-masters — such as Siemens, IG Farben and Flick. The Hungarian authorities waited nearly 50 years to make some token gestures. Nazi victims face bureaucratic mountains to obtain molebills of compensation. One survivor, who was forced into hiding in Budapest for nearly a year in 1944-5, finally obtained less than £60. Another was awarded an annuity of £22. It is still not possible to close the book on the Nazi oppressors of European Jews. Wallenberg's battle on behalf of the persecuted is not over.



Morgan: pants project



"Don't jump, Fred — we have shares in it"

P.H.S



DOWNING STREET CHAIRS

Who will sit where if Labour wins the election?

If Downing Street changes hands this year, will Downing Street change? While all the outward effort of the Labour Party is towards winning the election, much work is going on behind the scenes about how to make the office of the Prime Minister more effective for Tony Blair. As our Whitehall Editor reports today, some outlines of a Labour Number 10 can already be seen.

Planning of this kind may seem hubristic — both to superstitious supporters of Mr Blair and to Conservatives who continue to hope for reelection. But for a would-be prime minister that must be a worthwhile risk. A regular problem of incoming governments is their inability to hit the ground running. All too often they look back and rue how they wasted the first year or two in finding their way while the Civil Service ran the country for them. Advance preparation for government may prove more useful than any number of opposition policy documents.

A Prime Minister's personal style of government is a critical determinant of success. Margaret Thatcher was always a dominating personality with an encyclopaedic grasp of policy detail. But her decisive and effective tenure at Number 10 owed much to having the right advisers in the right places at the right time. Sir John Hoskyns, John Redwood, and Ferdinand Mount in Downing Street, backed at different times by a broad range of outsiders, played a significant part in her rise. Eventually her ministers found her too authoritarian; had she listened at the end as she had at the beginning, she might have survived.

John Major, in response to his colleagues' concerns, made government more collegiate. His advisers became more concerned with tactics than strategy. This certainly contributed to the drift and indecision that has marked the past five years. Mr Blair is being careful in revealing his plan for doing better; he knows that many of the men and women working for a Labour victory will be working too for their own top jobs thereafter; some, he knows, will be disappointed. But one aspect of his ambition seems clear.

Thatcher is a better model than Major; thus a stronger Downing Street, giving more direction from the centre, is required.

Two problems are eternal at Number 10. One is the lack of co-ordination between the political and the official sections — which often leads civil servants to be sucked into politics and political appointees into official matters. Mr Blair is known to be influenced by American models and may appoint a "chief of staff" to be a senior political link between the two. The second is the failure to raise the Prime Minister's eyes beyond the immediate week ahead; the best solution here is a cadre of outsiders, united by commitment to the leader's ideas, who can help to identify future obstacles and opportunities.

At this is much easier thought in Opposition than put into action in government. Success in practice often depends more on human nature than anything else. What turf-battles might a new chief of staff fight with the head of the policy unit? Will Alastair Campbell, Mr Blair's tough press secretary, switch smoothly from election fighter to explainer of government? Will Mr Blair find themes around which devoted Thatcher-like advisers will want to fight. Any "project" can so easily degenerate into battles for the Prime Minister's ear.

How to reduce the traditional departmental feudalism is another familiar difficulty. Mr Blair is thinking of making the Cabinet Secretary "a whip in Whitehall", ensuring that government priorities are not lost sight of in the in-fighting. Another idea is to replace some cabinet committees with taskforces of ministers and civil servants on issues which cross departments.

None of these reforms will by themselves make government work better. Edward Heath and Harold Wilson loved tinkering with the machinery of government but because they had so few strategic objectives, little was achieved. A Prime Minister with a sense of priorities and the strength of will to stick to them is the first prerequisite of good modern government, whatever the arrangement of the Downing Street chairs.

INTO OXFORD

The admissions reform that is failing its test

Oxford University has long been a proud home of lost causes. The latest is its scheme for increasing the proportion of state school entrants by reforming its admissions system. Two years ago the University decided to abolish its entrance examination on the grounds that it discriminated in favour of those from fee-paying schools. This argument was always rather curious: some 45 per cent of applicants exercised their right not to sit such papers. It was deemed, nonetheless, that the mere presence of a special Oxford entrance was elitist; a new system centred on A-level grades, as used by other universities, was intended to produce a more egalitarian result.

In fact, the percentage of places offered to state school students has not risen; indeed, it has slipped slightly from 43.6 per cent to 43 per cent. It will probably fall further once those who fail to achieve the requested three A-grades this summer are excluded. There are reasons for suspicion, that these statistics will not shift significantly, unless supplemented by further, equally dubious, manipulation.

In so far as the nature of its intake should be a matter of concern — itself a debatable assumption — Oxford's dilemma lies less in the proportion of state school aspirants it admits than in the raw numbers of those seeking entry. The dreaming spires are still seen as intellectually and socially unattainable by very large numbers of talented teenagers. An optional entrance examination may have been part of this problem but surely not a significant source.

Whatever harm the exam may have done

in this respect was far outweighed by the benefits. It allowed academics to spot students who possessed considerable ability but had not been well taught. The allegedly progressive alternative, based on A-level and interview, allows for much less subtlety. The small section of the student population which achieves maximum marks at A-level is dominated by independent or grammar schools. These pupils can also be expected to produce polished performances at interview. The proportion admitted from the state sector in coming years could easily stagnate.

It is unlikely that this will be allowed to happen. It is far more probable that, overtly or covertly, a two-tier structure will emerge. Candidates from the state sphere will be asked for lower A-level marks than their fee-paying contemporaries. Many grant-maintained schools and comprehensives in middle class areas have more in common with the private sector than with the troubled institutions of the inner cities. But distinctions like that would be missed in the desire to drive up overall numbers.

The reconstruction of the university entrance exam would be welcome but is, unfortunately, improbable. The onus instead should be on colleges and departments to design alternatives of their own. That has been tried this year in certain quarters but has proved patchy and confusing for school and student alike. Some form of additional written test, perhaps designed to be less daunting for those taking it, needs to be encouraged. Oxford should not try too hard to be "just another university". The danger is that it might succeed.

FUNERAL TEARS

When good men and good times are over

The Chinese leadership did its best to prevent undisciplined squads of emotion at the funeral of Deng Xiaoping. The mourners were handpicked, the crowds regimented, the ceremonies carefully staged. But not even the Communist Party could hide the overpowering emotion of Deng's distraught widow, or stifle the uncontrolled weeping by his chair-bound son. Surprisingly, such scenes of spontaneous grief were broadcast across the nation.

Widows are allowed — indeed, expected — to weep at funerals. In Western tradition, the passing of a statesman is enhanced, at least on television, by the brief but dignified brushing away of tears. How often have the merciless photographs of Jacqueline Kennedy at her husband's graveside been reproduced in history books. Even at the height of Communist secrecy about their leaders' private lives, Andropov's widow led his funeral cortege — intriguing Western analysts who had not known that the former KGB chief's wife was still alive.

Stoic, tearless obsequies, however, are peculiarly modern and European, or rather, north European. Less inhibited cultures glorify the expression of grief. Great heroes of the classical past were expected to give vent to their emotions. Achilles wept with Priam over Hector, whom he had killed in his rage, remembering his dear friend Patroclus. Niohe, "all tears", wept so much

for her sons and daughters that she turned into a pillar of stone — which still wept.

In the Middle East, wailing and ululating are the norm when menfolk depart. The Shia tradition is even more uninhibited: so frenzied were the crowds that bade farewell to Ayatollah Khomeini that order and dignity were lost, as was the balance of the catafalque, and the body of the revered spiritual leader toppled on to the ground.

Funerals are highly ritualised occasions, times when deep-seated cultures and long neglected religious observances forcefully assert themselves. They are an unusual combination of stylised public ceremony and spontaneous, human emotion. The second often gives force to the first, even at the expense of intrusion on the privacy of the mourners. It is, inevitably, the touch that the cameras now seek in this age of promiscuous emotion. President Clinton understands this. A man never afraid to show his feelings, he knows the electoral poignancy of grief, and has, according to observers, perfected the technique of weeping with just the eye that catches the camera.

Nations often weep because they were conditioned to worship the departed as gods — such as Stalin, or Kim Il Sung. Or they may mourn the passing of an age. Some know that with the death of their patrons, the good times are over for them. In China, all these feelings came into play.

'MPs here only for the tourists'

From Mr Richard Munday

Sir, The passage of the Firearms Bill may prove to be an electoral disaster for the Tories, but what it shows about our democratic process is more profoundly serious. Aside from the front-bench spokesmen, virtually every speaker in both Houses of Parliament extolled the futility and injustice of the Bill. But their constant lament was that parliamentary debate had not been devoted to the Cullen report before the legislation was defined.

The implication was that once the party positions were taken up and the whips went to work, there was little that they could really do. In what Lord Hailsham described as our "elective dictatorship", MPs were, as the Labour Whip John Cunnings once remarked, "only here for the tourists". Parliament, which was once the brake on the whim of government, has been reduced to its executive tool.

In the appeals voiced both in the Lords and Commons for the injustices of the Bill to be overturned in the European Court, and Lord Stoddart's call, even before the Bill was passed, for a grass-roots campaign to seek its repeal, was the admission that our system of parliamentary checks and balances had failed. More signally than in the poll tax demonstrations, one sees now in the growing marches of the Sportsman's Association a shift of the democratic forum.

A show of hands among 12,000 shooters at a rally on January 11 revealed that almost none had been to a demonstration before. Their presence on the streets was a mark of the atrophy of parliamentary representation; and the 25,000 protesters announced by the organisers to have been at the repeal march yesterday were a reminder that the true purpose of Parliament was government by consent.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD MUNDAY,
Camwell Hall,
Much Hadham, Hertfordshire.
February 24.

Nato enlargement

From Sir Bryan Cartledge

Sir, The most depressing feature of the current debate on Nato enlargement (Letters, February 12, 17) is the extent to which it is being conducted over the heads of those most directly concerned, namely the Polish, Hungarian and Czech peoples, and their democratically elected Governments. These Governments have decided that their new liberties will best be secured in partnership and alliance with the more mature and stronger European democracies.

Prominent in their historical memories are partitions (Poland, including the fourth partition in 1939), abandonment and occupation (Yalta, 1945) and repression (Hungary in 1949 and 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968). Looking eastwards, they can perhaps be forgiven for not fully sharing Western optimism that stable democracies are developing in Russia and Ukraine, let alone Belarus.

At Munich and at Yalta the West incurred a debt of honour to Central Europe which there is now an opportunity to redeem. But this is not just a matter of sentiment. The future stability of what, historically, has been the most unstable region of Europe would be best served by the unequivocal statement (Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty) that a threat to any of the three new democracies will be treated as a threat to the Alliance.

Russian policies, in both the Tsarist and the communist eras, have always shown readiness to observe a "stop" sign when it has been sufficiently large and legible. No legitimate Russian interest will be impaired if the sign is now erected on the eastern, rather than western, frontiers of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Yours faithfully,
BRYAN CARLEDGE
(British Ambassador to Hungary,
1980-83; to the Soviet Union, 1985-88),
Jasmine House, Holton, Oxford.

From Captain John Dobson,
RN (ret)

Sir, The sirens of caution about the enlargement of Nato contained in your leader and letters today are misguided. The countries of Eastern Europe clearly perceive a threat from Russia, albeit in the medium term, and this threat consists of both capability and intention.

The Russian Defence Minister, General Igor Rodionov, "the butcher of Tbilisi", is largely unreformed. He was Commandant of the General Staff Academy for a long period prior to being elevated in July 1996 to Defence Minister, and during those five years he had enormous influence over the ideology of several generations of senior officers from all Services. This is why Russian intentions will remain worrying to those countries aspiring to Nato throughout even a benign post-Yeltsin administration. Nato should move quickly to embrace these countries before the inevitable build-up of Russian capability as its economy grows stronger.

Procrastination is by far the more dangerous alternative.

Yours faithfully,
J. DOBSON (Naval Attaché,
British Embassy, Moscow, 1991-94),
151 Ashley Gardens, SW1,
February 17.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Call to reconsider evidence proposal

From the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and others

Sir, The proposal before Parliament under the new Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act whereby evidential material in serious criminal cases need only be retained for three years after conviction is insidious and should be dropped.

The appalling tragedy of the Bridgewater case, following the Guildford Four and Maguire cases with which we were closely involved for several years, and other similar cases, reveals the persisting inability of our criminal justice system to root out and remedy genuine miscarriages of justice at an early stage.

We hope the new Criminal Cases Review Commission will prove itself capable of getting to the truth in such cases more quickly and thereby help

to restore the battered reputation of our Criminal Appeals system.

But the Commission cannot even begin this formidable task unless all the evidence in cases which may be referred to it in future has been conscientiously preserved. The convictions of the Guildford Four and the Maguires would never have been quashed if such a three-year rule had been applied.

To introduce one now would be irresponsible beyond belief. We urge the Home Secretary to think again.

Yours faithfully,
BASIL HUMBLE,
ROY JENKINS,
MERLYN REES,
SCARMAN,
Archbishop's House,
Westminster, SW1,
February 24.

Ways to preserve our grand houses

From Mr Michael Herbert

Sir, May I make two points arising out of Simon Jenkins's admirable piece, "Stately homes of England in the lurch" (February 22).

First, I doubt whether today's owners struggle through "long and lonely" weekdays, as did their forebears in the 1930s and after the last war. Since the Historic Houses Association was founded by Lord Montagu and others in 1973, greater sympathy has been shown by successive governments towards the real difficulties of owners. As a result, I believe that the families named by Mr Jenkins — and many others — can reasonably look forward to passing on to their successors a relatively comfortable inheritance.

Secondly, the grand house is by no means a British monopoly. In many other European countries, from Spain to Sweden, these houses and estates have suffered — and often continue to suffer — at least as badly from changed economic conditions and from crushing taxation. Nevertheless a study of the awards made in recent years by Europa Nostra, a European heritage body on the council of which I serve, vividly illustrates the successful efforts made by owners all over Europe to match the widely admired British contribution.

Yours sincerely,
M. HERBERT,
14 Eaton Place, SW1,
February 22.

From Mr A. C. Tinsley

Sir, Simon Jenkins is right to endorse the salvation of stately homes, but I question the need to polarise the issue as being a choice between old houses and new ones, in favour of the latter.

Without the original house as their focus, many of the adjoining parks, warehouses, outbuildings and pleasure gardens which have been lost to us through fire, dry rot, window tax or the agricultural restrictions of the 1870s and 1930s would have been left to decay even further. Such estates frequently offer the best opportunity for the construction of a new house on the scale of its predecessor.

An average of only one new stately home per English county per decade has been built since the Second World War. A less restrictive policy, especially in regard to the old sites, but still with the highest requirements of architectural merit, would bring new money to the restoration of what remains.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY TINSLEY,
Narborough Hall,
King's Lynn, Norfolk.
February 22.

Insurers and gene tests

From Mr Peter J. Firth

Sir, I fail to see how the insurance companies can benefit themselves by demanding gene test results (Letters, February 22; article, Mind and Matter, February 24).

When all the dust has settled — in, say, ten years' time — any uninsurable underclass will be counterbalanced by an overclass of thoroughly insurable people who will be attractive to competitive insurers and will therefore gain insurance at lower rates.

Overall, neither premiums nor the insurance companies' profits will rise as a result of this change. All that will be achieved is reduced rates for the majority, enhanced accuracy of the insurers' statistics — and continued oppression of the underclass.

Yours sincerely,
PETER J. FIRTH,
1 Currell's Row,
Lacey Green, Princes Risborough,
Buckinghamshire,
February 19.

Tiny Charles

From Mr John Mansfield

Sir, As Charles Dickens obviously did not want any commemorative statue (Letters, February 25) and left Portsmouth, his birthplace, at the age of two, why not compromise? His ghost might be placated, even amused, if his fan club at Portsmouth University had a statue made of baby Dickens as he toddled away to learn to write.

It could give Portsmouth a better perspective on its literary legacy.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MANSFIELD,
135 Dalling Road, W6,
February 25.

Clap track?

From Mr Tony Killen

Sir, As a born-again Christian, failed Anglican, and occasional rail traveller, I sometimes find myself becoming confused between the subjects of some of your letters ("End of the line?", "Church clappies", etc, February 22).

If I've got this right, then the 1662 Service is South West Trains jargon for the delayed 4.59.

Yours sincerely,
TONY KILLEN,
202 Bishop Road,
Bishopston, Bristol.
February 24.

'German-baiting' over Rifkind row

From Mr Chaim Bermant

Sir, There is nothing wrong in the use of the expression "the Jew Rifkind" in a German paper, but there is everything wrong in the outcry it has provoked (report, February 22; letters, February 24).

As you have noted yourself, the expression doesn't sound as harsh in German as in English; there is something mildly ironic in the sound of a practising Jew evoking Luther to denounce an argument. So the reference was in no way gratuitous.

One might have been troubled by the use of the word in an irresponsible or racist publication, whereas the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* is one of the most respected papers in Europe.

It has nothing to apologise for, but I'm beginning to feel that both the FAZ and Germany are owed an apology by the way some commentators have treated the incident in the British press.

There are people who will never miss an opportunity to go in for a bit of gratuitous German-baiting, and if the opportunity does not arise they will create it.

Yours faithfully,
CHAIM BERMANT,
18 Hill Rise, NW11,
February 24.

From Senior Dr Albrecht Weber

Sir, It seems very strange to me that a politician may not quote freely any author irrespective of his or her author's religious background. In that sense, in my opinion, the article by Michaela Wiegand in the normally excellent *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* was

Lorries and bridges

From Mr N. G. Walker

Sir, In the last paragraph of his letter (February 21) David Green, Director General of the Freight Transport Association, repeats the old saw that increasing lorry weights to 44-tonnes will mean fewer lorries on the roads. It will not. What larger lorries will mean are lower road haulage costs.

This would further tilt the economic balance against rail haulage in favour of road transport. This is especially so because rail freight operators have to carry their full "track costs", whereas road hauliers do not carry their fair share of road costs.

Mr Green also suggests increasing investment to fund the assessment and strengthening of roads and bridges — presumably by the taxpayer — to carry the new heavier lorries. This would be inequitable. Rail operators wishing to run faster or heavier trains pay for the necessary track improvements. Road hauliers should be expected to do the same.

Yours faithfully,
N. G. WALKER (Secretary,
North Chiltern Rail Users' Group),
Stockwell Farm,
17 High Street, Haddenham,
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

From Mr Philip Venning

Sir, The most conspicuous omission from the Transport Select Committee

tee's report (report, February 12, later editions) is the recognition that many road bridges still in use are of historic interest and are legally protected as listed buildings or in some cases scheduled ancient monuments. This is especially true of local authority-owned bridges, many of which the select committee would like to see strengthened.

Some historic bridges have been successfully strengthened to take heavier lorries without too much loss of their historic fabric and interest. But this needs the skills of the right kind of engineers, whose priority may not be that of improving traffic flow.

Sadly some strengthening proposals have involved drastic rebuilding of bridges, in extreme cases simply recladding what is effectively a new structure with stone salvaged from the old one.

During this process it is far from clear that the expertise of English Heritage and other statutory authorities concerned with listed buildings has always been drawn on.

Britain is lucky to have so many historic bridges. More stringent weight restrictions offer the best hope of preserving them for the future.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP VENNING
(Secretary, The Society for the
Protection of Ancient Buildings),
37 Spital Square, E1,
February 21.

Danger, wild boar

From Mr John E. Cooper

Sir, I recently read a disconcerting piece of news attributed to your paper and printed in our local *Record of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania*.

For many generations we have believed that our ancestor, Richard de Gylypyn, had slain the last wild boar in England only to find out now (report, February 19) that there are still wild boar wandering about Sir Paul McCartney's farm in Kent.

The implications are horrendous: it is possible that Uncle Richard was a fake and we will now be required to return the Manor of Kentmere? God forbid! The alternative is no less attractive, as it would mean that Britain now has imported wild boars. French or German perhaps... or did they sneak over through the Channel?

Why are these beasts still roaming the countryside? Perhaps Paul's neighbors are just seeing things.

Sincerely,
JOHN E. COOPER,
612 Montgomery Road,
Ambler, PA 19002,
February 12.

Northern Ireland votes

From Dr Brian Huss

Sir, Nick Ross perpetuates a common myth (the Valerie Grove interview, February 21) when he says: "When the Troubles began [in Northern Ireland], the English sided immediately with the Catholics, not because of nationalism but because they had no votes".

Parliamentary elections in Northern Ireland, both to Stormont and to Westminster, have always been on the basis of universal adult suffrage. In local council elections the system still applied at the start of the Troubles that only ratepayers had a vote.

Thus I, a Protestant in my early twenties and living with my parents at the time, had no local vote, while those of my friends, Catholic or Protestant, who were ratepayers, did.

Yours etc,
BRIAN HUSS,
13 Magheralave Park North,
Lisburn, Co Antrim,
February 24.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

Television viewers improve with age

You'd think that they would see the joke, but no, terrestrial television chiefs are in hot pursuit of the audience least interested in watching television, and the smallest. I refer to young adults. With better things to do than sit in front of the box, this desired bunch probably doesn't even notice that TV is being redesigned to catch its preoccupied eyes. The age beyond which the viewer becomes unwanted varies with statistics. Sometimes, it is 45, as in Channel 5's description of its target audience as the 16-45s. Of course, CS acknowledges that middle age is a state of mind and that all viewers are welcome. As Dawn Airey, CS's girlishly aggressive programme director, told a questioner at the Royal Television Society's dinner last week: "You're not an old fart. You'll enjoy our channel."

Often, the limit is lower, with the desired viewer even being 35. If the senior half of the national TV audience were an ethnic group, the disparagements voiced against it would be a case for the Commission on Racial Equality. Just last week, the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising noted sorrowfully that "TV's age profile is slipping once again." To advertisers, "slipping" means up, not down. The ITV audience is conspicuously older than that of the other channels (in peak time 42.4 per cent of its viewers are 35 or older) and bad news for advertisers — tend to be poorer.

ITV retorted that, as its peak time audience is the biggest of all the four terrestrial channels, it can boast more of every age group. It is also gaining in the upper-income groups. Is there not a demographic moral escaping the channel combatants? The older audience is the more desirable one. For commercial channels, those who have the money to buy the cars, computers, foreign holidays and long-distance telephone calls advertised on TV are those whose children are off their hands and who have paid off their mortgages. For the BBC, they are those with the attention span to devote to its science, history and classic-drama programmes.

The BBC, the demographer from Mars might think, should be immune from the cult of youth. It does not have to sell space to advertisers and all ages equally pay the licence fee. It knows that its programmes reach the older viewers. Last year BBC2 put out a series for the elderly last year called *The Third Age*, which advocated community

service, ballroom dancing and even sex for pensioners, and ended with the sweet-sour news that by the year 2050 there's a good chance that many Britons will live to the age of 112.

So everything should be set for the BBC to roll with the population trends towards the greying audience. But that is not how the corporation sees the future. It too must tilt towards youth. It too seems about to redesign its news to appear to be less authoritarian, younger and more related to the lives of viewers.

Now it is understandable that any broadcaster is concerned with wooing tomorrow's audience. As every newspaper owner knows, there is no joy in having a million readers if many of them are not going to last the winter; the next generation must be attracted. But not with a mirror of their own world. One of the benefits of growing older is the realisation of not living in a world of one; either of one person or one country.

Airey has been accused of thinking that today's young are a breed apart from the older generation. Yet in one sense it is right to diagnose an absolute gap between youth and age, marked by technology, sex and financial insecurity. Tomorrow's greying adults will be totally at ease with hundreds of television channels. They will be less worried about sexual scenes on television, less likely to flood the various complaints bodies with objections to this word or that, and less given to writing to Radio 4 to protest about the sloppy pronunciation of "seketary" for "secretary".

But some human processes are eternal. Tomorrow's over-45s will be mature and wiser than they were in their thirties. They will see themselves as part of the human race, not just of their age group. Their horizons will broaden as their children move around the globe more freely than they themselves ever could. And, as they face the prospect of living for a century, they will be tolerant of aging, happier to take their news from someone who looks like Trevor McDonald and whose face carries more memory of the past than from a born-yesterday such as CS's 27-year-old Kirsty Young. And they will be conscious of their numbers: grey power. They will be unquestionably the majority audience and what they will want is not television for protracted teenagers but television for grown-ups.



BRENDA MADDOX

Two new recruits for Radio 2

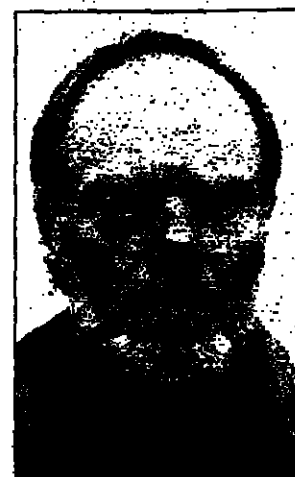
FEEDING speculation that Radio 2 is out to steal even more listeners from Radio 1, the station has poached Richard Allinson, the early morning presenter on Capital FM. Radio 1's big rival.

New radio audience figures show that Radio 2, which already employs Steve Wright, a former Radio 1 DJ, has overtaken Radio 1 for only the second time in its history. An estimated 300,000 of its new listeners are believed to have been picked up from Radio 1. And in a further sign of Radio 2's drive for younger listeners, it has hired "whispering" Bob Harris from GLR, the BBC's local London station.

Picture imperfect
THE Bridgewater Three's release caused problems for photographers as they jostled outside the Appeal Court to capture the first moment of



Allinson, left, and Harris: youth appeal for Radio 2



identified as Michael Hickey and his photograph slipped on the front page.

freedom for James Robinson, Michael Hickey and Vincent Hickey. After 18 years in jail there were a few problems identifying them. One snapper seemed to be confusing one of the Hickey cousins with *The Express's* gossip columnist, asking loudly: "Which one's William Hickey?" Confusion reigned at the *Evening Standard*, where a chap with a moustache and crewcut, who had earlier been led into court for a completely different case, found himself

Tina's arena
THE imminent departure of Tina Caudoin from the deputy editor's chair at *Tatler* will cause further headaches for Jane Procter, its editor, who has seen half a dozen senior staff leave in as many months. Caudoin is to be the editor of a new fashion and lifestyle women's magazine inspired

by the men's magazine *Arena*. Is this the start of a trend? First there were glossy fashion and lifestyle women's magazines. Then publishers dreamt up glossy fashion and lifestyle magazines for men. These have proved so successful that they, too, are now being copied. For women. This autumn, Waggoner is to launch a magazine based on its men's title, *Gandoin*, says: "It will not be identical to *Arena*, but it will be a thought-provoking, glossy fashion monthly."

Jaspan's mistake
ANDREW JASPAN'S bullish reputation is being revised since he modestly denied any responsibility for the soaring circulation of *The Big Issue*, of which he is publisher and managing director.

Despite the magazine's success, Jaspan was downbeat when addressing a Newspaper Society conference in Brighton. He said: "I remember Warwick Brindle [then Jaspan's boss] telling me I was making the biggest mistake of my life leaving *The Scotsman* after only six months to edit *The Observer*. I guess you were right, Warwick."

A few hardened executives had what looked like tears in their eyes.

MIKE SMALLWOOD, the chief executive of Western International Media, the new media buying arm of Lowe Howard Spink, has issued an unusual challenge to the radio industry. Having decided that his staff will benefit from having radio programmes piped into the toilets, he has invited national and London-based stations to pitch for the "franchise". "He is," an insider said, "looking for something that will reflect the company's warm culture."

Sale of the Central
YOU might think that Central Television, with a cash bid for the licence of just over £2,000, had enough money in its coffers. Even so, the station, whose productions include *Sharp and Inspector Morse*, has decided to auction off virtually the entire contents of its Broad Street, Birmingham HQ after its imminent move to a swanky £15 million building in Gas Street. More than 8,000 lots will be flogged.

Style rather than stars

FIVE leading creative directors have dramatically reopened the debate about style versus content in advertising by placing a double-page ad in *Campaign*. Costing an estimated £5,000, the ad reads: "We would like to remind the D&AD jury... that it is ideas that move people, not techniques."

The ad coincides with this week's opening of judging for the Design & Art Directors awards. It refers to debate that has come to a head with the advent of ever-more sophisticated technology and star directors.

Tim Delaney — creative director of Leagas Delaney and a signatory and former D&AD president — says: "We are trying to make the jurors aware that it's not who's done the ad or what

it looks like that is important, it's the idea. It's bad for the industry to be seduced by form."

IT APPEARS that advertising practitioners never tire of teaching their clients how difficult their job is. Low Howard Spink jumped on the bandwagon this week by holding a two-day educational session for the benefit of 25 clients and new business prospects.

Marc Cave, Lowe's assistant managing director, insists: "It was not about showing clients how hard we work but about educating them to understand the process and to come up

with good briefs for us." The clients were divided into several groups and briefed to create a relaunch for Scalextric, the car game, in two days — slightly less time than the average agency would have.

THE Advertising Standards Authority has become involved in more controversy — over an ad for Hamilton House, the direct-mail company. Hamilton says the ASA disclosed confidential information about the company when investigating an objection by Dudley Jenkins, rival operators, to Hamilton's claim that it had more than 50 per cent of the market.

BELINDA ARCHER



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Free speech - use it or lose it

Journalists, by and large, have a fairly poor reputation. But I have come to believe that people who view investigative journalists in particular as being several steps beyond the pale often have something to hide. They will tell you their rights are being abused while they abuse the rights of others. They will tell you that investigative journalists are trying to usurp the system, even to pervert the course of justice.

The point that is often lost, however, is that journalists sometimes pursue stories precisely because "the system" or "British justice" has let down the very people they ought to be protecting. Investigative journalists are not perfect, but then neither is the society they report on. Much ails the body politic which cannot heal itself, even if it does acknowledge an illness. Many is the case we have followed, not to act as a self-appointed surrogate police force, not to usurp the due process, but as a direct result of the failure of that process, or because the system itself has been manipulated by one special interest group. An investigative article or programme often serves as a "court of last resort" and as such is hardly likely to earn the approval of the Establishment.

Sadly, there seem to be fewer regular outlets for quality investigative journalism these days. Do we think society is now well enough protected and regulated to settle back into smug silence? What is the point of a free press if that freedom

The ability to investigate and expose injustice is priceless, says Roger Cook

isn't fully used? The ability to investigate and to expose injustice, bureaucratic bungling and outright criminality is surely priceless. Use it or lose it they say, and that's especially true of Britain where freedom of speech is not a statutory right, and secrecy is a way of life for those who govern us. The system is not infallible (look at the mess made of the Stephen Lawrence case - with the result that his killers will probably escape scot-free). Where would the Bridgewater Three be now without the efforts of investigative journalists such as Paul Foot and David Jesse?

Investigative journalism is an expensive and time-consuming business, which is perhaps why now it is often replaced by the pseudo expose, where presumption and assumption have superseded the search for hard facts. Bearing in mind that the ultimate bias is in the selection of the subject in the first place, every effort ought to be made to be fair thereafter. "Balance" is something else. In the real world, giving equal space or airtime to a phillibustering fraudster is about as useful as a chocolate teapot.

There are many pitfalls - legal

and ethical - when conducting an investigation. Will what you do genuinely preclude a fair trial? When does a proactive approach become incitement? Is your research fireproof? Does what you propose exposing really matter to the person in the street, or is it for the esoteric edification of the inhabitants of a few square feet of the Square Mile? The list goes on. And it is beginning to look as if we may need more protection from those allegedly protecting us. You have probably heard stories about the security firms who run protection rackets or the policemen who run burglars.

You cannot learn everything about investigative journalism in a classroom, but you cannot do it properly without the right ground rules. That is why the masters degree course in investigative journalism launched tomorrow by Nottingham Trent University is bound to be a worthwhile venture.

Students will be introduced to "investigative field craft" - how to follow miscreants without their knowing, or how to use hidden cameras and microphones, how and when to operate an undercover "sting" (set-up) or read a balance sheet to reveal criminal activity.

In short, freedom of speech must be used to be preserved - but if it is abused by poor investigative journalism, both will become devalued.

Details of the MA in Investigative Journalism available from Nottingham Trent University on 0115 948 6335/6677



Roger Cook and team: "Many is the case we have followed as a result of the failure of due process, or because the system has been manipulated"

Changing sides: How the Tory press has fallen

The Tory press is no longer, at least among newspaper readers. Only four national papers have a majority of readers who say they support the Tories, compared with nine daily and Sunday papers which did at the time of the 1992 general election.

The Times has become the most representative broadsheet. The political views of its readers are now nearer those of the electorate as a whole than its main competitors.

The four Tory bastions remain the *Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Express* and *The Express on Sunday*. By contrast, 75 per cent or more of the readers of *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Mirror* and the *Sunday Mirror* say they back Labour.

This is shown by a detailed analysis by MORI of the political views of newspaper readers between the 1992 election and the whole of 1996 from nearly 70,000 interviews. Support for the two main parties has changed dramatically over the past five years. There has been a swing of 17.5 per cent from Tories to Labour since the 1992 election. Tory support has dropped by 15 percentage points, with Labour up 20 points, while the Liberal Democrats' rating has

fallen by five points. The polls also reveal a rise from 6 to 10 per cent in those saying they will not vote. This could point to a rise in people staying at home and the lowest turnout since World War Two.

The striking feature of the latest analysis is the large variation between papers. In particular, the swing from the Tories to Labour among readers of *The Times* was 26.5 per cent between 1992 and last year. This reflects a combination of a change of voting intentions among long-term readers of *The Times* and the more than doubling in the

paper's circulation over the period. MORI has devised a partisanship index which measures the support of readers of papers for the various parties relative to the national distribution of voting intentions.

Thus, an index rating of 1.00 is exactly in line with the national average. A reading above 1.00 means that support for a party is above the national average, below 1.00 below average.

On the basis, support for Labour among readers of *The Times* has moved from 0.43 in 1992 to 0.78 last year. By contrast, the Tory index has declined from 1.49 to 1.39. In percentage terms, 39 per cent of readers of *The Times* say

they support the Tories, and 43 per cent Labour. In 1992, the shares were 64 and 15 per cent respectively.

By contrast, party support among readers of other broadsheets has become more polarised. The Tory partisanship index among readers of *The Daily Telegraph* has risen from 1.67 to 1.93 since 1992. There has been a swing to Labour among its readers, but support for the party is still much lower than among voters generally, with a partisanship index of 0.51, against 0.31 in 1992.

Among the tabloids, the biggest switches in party support have occurred among readers of previously strongly pro-Tory papers such as *The Sun* with a 22 per cent swing and *The Daily Mail* with a 20.5 per cent swing.

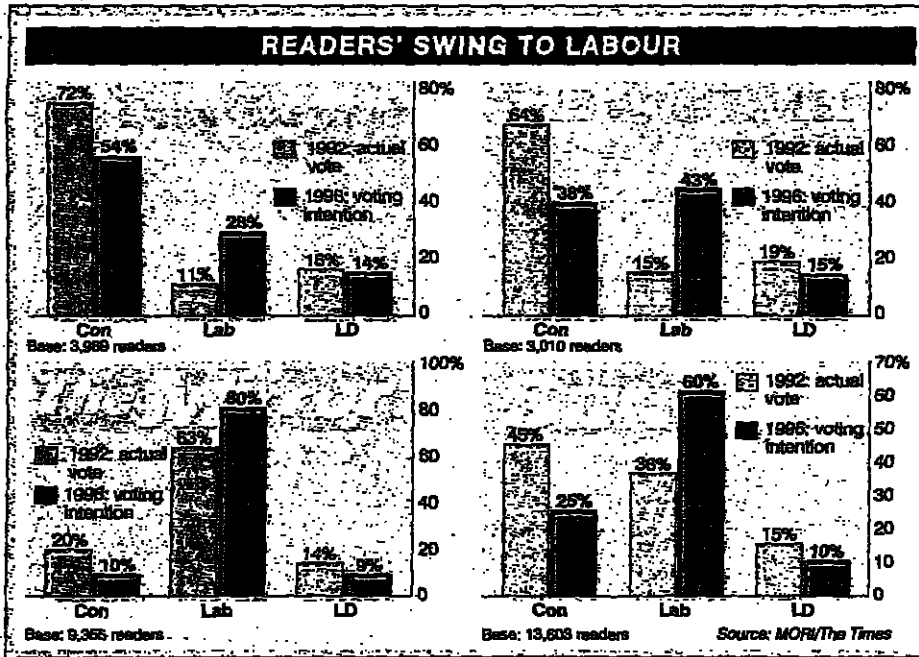
In 1992, the political preferences of readers of *The Sun* were very close to those of the electorate as a whole and this is still broadly true, although *Sun* readers have become slightly less Tory.

The readership of the *Daily Mail* is still predominantly Tory. Some 46 per cent of its readers back the Tories and 36

per cent Labour. Its Tory partisanship index, measuring support relative to the national average, has risen from 1.51 to 1.64 since 1992, while its Labour index has risen from 0.40 to 0.65.

In the Sunday papers, the biggest swings from Tories to Labour have been among readers of the *Independent on Sunday* and *The Sunday Times*. The Tory partisanship index has risen since 1992 among readers of *The Express on Sunday*, *The Mail on Sunday*, and *The Sunday Telegraph*.

Robert Worcester is chairman of MORI and Peter Riddell is political columnist of *The Times*.



Good news, bad news and the headline grabbers

Durants, the press cuttings agency which reads nearly 200,000 newspapers and magazines a year for clients who want to track how and where their companies are reported, has started to monitor in detail the subjects covered in the British press.

It offers some fascinating insights into the subjects and personalities deemed newsworthy by editors. The first Durants report shows that only weeks before the general election Tony Blair is cruising ahead of John Major in the spin doctors' battle to grab headlines. Analysing the 10 national newspapers and six regionals (in Edinburgh, Liverpool, Cardiff, Norwich, Portsmouth and Birmingham), it shows that the Labour leader had nearly twice as much coverage as Major in the past month - and that Labour got 10 times as much as the Conservatives.

David Reeds, the Durants' press researcher, also analysed whether headlines were positive or negative. He found almost all the coverage of the Conservatives was negative, compared with just under half the reporting of Labour. Although the Liberal Democrats achieved more party political coverage than the Tories, it was mostly negative.

When he was given the task of reading all the national papers every day, Reeds assumed that he would find they were full of



"bad" news. They were not, even though he was surprised at the amount of negative coverage of overseas news. "I got the impression that we don't like abroad very much, though that was much truer of the tabloids than the broadsheets," he says.

Still surprising, even to journalists, is the space given to sport. It received almost twice as many column centimetres as the economy, which was second in the table of "headline grabbers". Apart from science (16th), sport was the only subject where Reeds considered there was more positive than negative coverage. After sport and the economy, the most newsworthy subjects in the past month were politics, crime, the arts, health, education, Europe and transport. Sex and royalty were 13th and 14th. News about the weather came last.

On personalities, Blair received marginally less coverage than Diana Princess of Wales, with Major fourth behind Sarah Duchess of Cornwall and above Michael Atherton, Prince Charles, Tim Henman, the Queen and Richard Branson.

NEWSPAPER commentators seeking controversy by inviting former editors to attack the *Daily Mirror* (now *The Mirror*) have always failed. Roy Greenslade has been a fierce critic but Hugh Cudlipp, Mike Molloy and Richard Stott have refused to be drawn into making any criticisms - at least publicly - of their successors. Even during John Pilger's demolition job on the modern *Mirror* last week, Cudlipp made no direct attack on editor Piers Morgan or chief executive David Montgomery.

Molloy, however, came out of the closet this month and delivered a swinging attack on *The Mirror* in the *New Statesman*. The paper (revamped last month) was mired in sexual trivia and obsessed by the triumphs and excesses of a sub-world inhabited by Stringfellow celebrities, he said. Montgomery had no empathy for *Mirror* readers and did not understand newspapers.

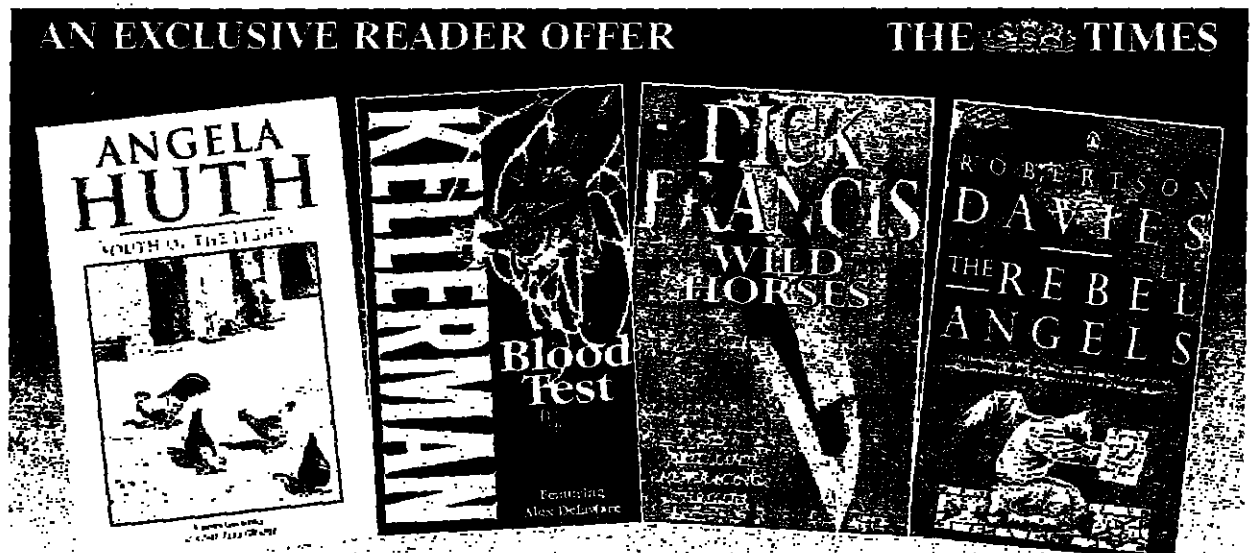
Morgan hit back in *The Guardian*. He pointed out that when Pilger joined the *Mirror* in 1963, its sale was

4,730,000; when he left in 1985 it was 3,100,000. Everywhere he went, journalists talked in hushed tones of the glory days of the *Mirror* - but had the *Daily Mirror* been quite the paper its former editors contended?

What about the front page splash in February 1999 devoted to a five-column picture of a bulldog at a microphone from a National Pets Club lunch and carried over to page 3 under the headline "Woof Woof"? Or all the pictures of girls he found in issues selected at random from the 1960s? And what, too, about the modern *Mirror's* campaigns for Hillsborough relatives, Royal British Legion veterans, VAT on fuel, Rwandan refugees or a knife amnesty?

Older journalists always look back to golden ages, but few had to deal with the gruelling competition faced daily by the editors of the 1990s. As Morgan pointed out, 30,000 *Mirror* readers die every year, and he needs to attract new, younger readers or get fired.

The *Mirror* seems to be increasing its coverage of the Labour Party as the election approaches and also publishing a few longer reads. On Monday, too, it named the man it claimed was really guilty of murdering Carl Bridgewater - but was that, as its critics say, simply an attempt to catch up with the *Daily Mail* which has named five men as murderers? The jury remains out.



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CHANGING TIMES

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THE TIMES

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the Barbican?
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Shearer ruled out
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by surgeon's knife
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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26 1997

Shares decline by 36p as bank stays silent on buyback programme

NatWest hit by cost of restructuring

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

SHARES in NatWest dropped 36p to 776½p after the bank reported huge restructuring costs and gave no indications of when it might begin a new programme of buying back shares.

The high street bank, which is in the middle of a radical branch closure programme, also revealed that it had dropped out of the bidding for Scottish Amicable, the mutual life company.

Derek Wanless, chief executive, confirmed that he had signed a confidentiality agreement to inspect the mutual's finances, but decided the price tag was too high and withdrew on Monday. This now leaves five bidders still interested in Scottish Amicable ahead of Friday's closing date for offers.

The bank gave warning that it was becoming more cautious on lending to small businesses, property and construction companies, which it regards as high-risk in the current economic climate.

In the late 1980s high street banks suffered large losses when they lent to some small businesses that collapsed during the recession. Mr Wanless said: "It is the time in the economic cycle when bad lending decisions are made."

Lord Alexander of Weedon, chairman, said: "We see the pace of growth slowing in 1998 and are adopting a more cautious approach to lending." Surplus capital would be returned to shareholders, he

said, but gave no indications of when this might be. Some analysts had expected the bank to announce that it would spend £220 million buying back a further 28 million shares.

Pre-tax profit for the group in 1996 was £1.12 billion, down from £1.75 billion in 1995. This figure included a gain of £224 million from the sale of investments in the venture capital group 3i, and losses of £719 million from the disposal of subsidiaries, including £690 million from Bancorp in the United States and £186 million relating to the redesign of the retail bank.

NatWest has set a target of

Pennington 27

reducing its retail branches to 1,750 and its staff by 10,000 over the next three to four years. The bank closed 302 branches last year and now has 1,921 still operating. Staff numbers have been reduced by 2,900, to 32,400, since 1995 at a cost of £95 million in redundancy payments.

Mr Wanless declined to comment on reports that NatWest was seeking £10 million compensation from Tesco in a dispute over the loyalty card service it provided.

He revealed that the group will spend an extra £100 million this year to upgrade its technology, plus £100 million over the next two years on

preparing for the millennium.

City eyes were on NatWest Markets, the investment banking arm which the bank has been trying to grow to rival Barclays' BZW. NatWest Markets reported a 52 per cent increase in pre-tax profits, to £462 million, after BZW turned in disappointing results last week. However, NWM's bad-debt provision was sharply reduced from £114 million in 1995 to £18 million last year. With this stripped out underlying profits grew by 13 per cent.

Mr Wanless said the acquisition of Gleacher in 1995 and Gartmore, Greenwich and Hambro Magan last year had helped to "fill the key strategic gaps" in NWM. Further acquisitions were not needed.

Operating profit on the group's continuing businesses was up £339 million, or 27 per cent, to £1.61 billion. At NatWest UK, income increased by 6 per cent while costs fell by 2 per cent.

A final dividend of 19.4p will be paid on May 1, bringing the total to 29p, up 14.6 per cent. Earnings per share were 23p (1995: 67.6p), while headline earnings per share were 66.6p (1995: 64.9p). Total capital ratio improved by 0.1 per cent, to 10.8 per cent, and tier one ratio was unchanged at 6.7 per cent. A share repurchase scheme already in place amounted to £451 million in July.

No bill for Tesco, page 27



Lord Alexander, NatWest chairman, flanked by Richard Delbridge, left, chief finance officer, and Derek Wanless, group chief executive, at the bank's art gallery in the City

Seventh Barings director banned by SFA

By JASON NISSE

JAMES BAX, who ran the Barings office where "rogue trader" Nick Leeson worked, yesterday became the seventh former director of the merchant bank to be banned by the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA) after its inquiry into the bank's collapse.

Mr Bax accepted the ruling that he should be banned for 21 months and pay £10,000 expenses, saying that he could not afford the "substantial costs" of defending himself against the SFA's charges.

Mr Bax's solicitor, Marie-Caroline Frochet of Richards Butler, said Mr Bax had hoped to pay for the hearing through an insurance policy taken out by Barings, but that cover was unconfirmed. Mr Bax's defence costs would have exceeded £100,000.

He and nine other former Barings chiefs were yesterday served notices by the Department of Trade and Industry, which said it would try to have them disqualified as directors for between two and 15 years.

Ian Hopkins, former head of treasury at Barings, has a week to decide whether to appeal against an order banning him for three years. Mr Hopkins, who has been called the whistleblower because of his memos about Leeson, has not appeared before the SFA. The only ex-Barings director to fight the SFA has been Ron Baker, who ran the financial products operation. He was given a public reprimand and asked to pay £7,500 costs and has now lodged an appeal.

Mary Walz, who worked with Mr Baker, accepted a reprimand and five directors have agreed to bans of up to three years and paid costs of up to £10,000.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET
MOVES

FTSE 100	4244.7	(+13.6)
FTSE All share	2121.82	(+7.10)
Nikkei	19070.07	(+173.08)
New York	6988.57	(-18.63)
Dow Jones	23500	(+2.57)
S&P Composite	808.71	(-1.57)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	5 5/8%	(5 5/8%)
Yield	6.66%	(6.66%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
Libor long	11 3/4%	(11 3/4%)

STERLING

New York	1.6325	(1.6325)
London	1.6342	(1.6335)
DM	2.7386	(2.7274)
FF	5.2375	(5.2027)
Sfr	1.4840	(1.4575)
Yen	121.25	(122.18)
£ Index	103.2	(103.0)

DOLLAR

London	1.6773	(1.6733)
DM	5.6580	(5.6395)
FF	1.4840	(1.4575)
Yen	121.25	(122.18)
£ Index	103.2	(103.0)

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (May)	\$18.35	(\$18.55)
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GOLD

London close	\$353.45	(\$352.85)
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* denotes midday trading price

Pounding

Worldwide success for the Spice Girls could not prevent EMI, the music company, from suffering a dip in third-quarter earnings. The soaring pound knocked £16 million off profits. Page 27

War chest

Guardian Royal Exchange has built up a £1 billion war chest to fund acquisitions at home and abroad. The shares fell on fears that the insurance group could become embroiled in a costly battle. Page 31

Hughes sees future in The Mirror

PENNY HUGHES, pictured, former president of Coca-Cola Great Britain & Ireland, was yesterday made a non-executive director of Mirror Group (Morag Preston writes).

A key figure in the "cola wars", Ms Hughes left the fizzy drinks corporation in January 1995 before having a baby. For a fee of £30,000, she will work 25 days a year for Mirror Group, publisher of *The Mirror*, and it is expected that she will sit on the audit committee.

Ms Hughes, who is in her mid-thirties, is also a non-executive director of Next, Bazaar and The Body Shop. She was on the board of the beauty *Temporibus* last year when a decision was made not to take the company private.



Wimpey expecting a peak year

By PAUL DURMAN

GEORGE WIMPEY, the UK's biggest house builder, yesterday said that it expects 1997 to be a peak year in the housing market, as it reported doubled pre-tax profits of £31.5 million.

Last year's profit was the highest since 1990, but Wimpey expects substantially more this year. Some City analysts expect profits to double again, to about £60 million.

Joe Dwyer, chairman, said that Wimpey had enjoyed buoyant trading in the first eight weeks of this year. He said that rising house prices are feeding through to the new homes market. "In the last quarter of 1996, the recovery in the housing market started in earnest," he said.

Mr Dwyer expressed little concern about the effect of the forthcoming general election. He said: "There may be a small hiatus, perhaps a week or two either side of the general election, but otherwise [the market] should remain good."

Wimpey's recovery last year was aided by its deal with Tarmac, swapping its construction and minerals businesses for McLean Homes. This has left Wimpey concentrated on housebuilding, with scope for savings from increased purchasing power.

McLean Homes contributed £45.7 million of operating profits on £492 million of sales, completing 5,957 sales at

an average price of £84,000.

Wimpey Homes contributed profits of £20 million (£28.3 million) on reduced sales of £419.8 million. Private housing sales fell from 5,802 to 5,018, leading to a fall in margins. Wimpey blamed this on a "tired" product range. It has introduced new designs, incorporating space-saving features in kitchens and bath-

rooms and offering more variety in external appearance.

In the US, Morrison Homes continued to expand rapidly, completing 1,400 sales. Although it lost £2.2 million last year, it is now making profits.

Wimpey was held back by £20 million of interest payments on debts that ended the year at £178 million, up from £165 million the year before.

Tempus, page 28

Labour proposes penalties for broken house deals

By SARA MCCONNELL

HOUSEBUYERS and sellers could both be faced with paying the other side's legal and mortgage costs if they back out of a deal without good reason before exchanging contracts.

Labour yesterday outlined proposals to tackle the practice of gazumping by means of a costs guarantee agreement. This would compel each side to pay the other's costs as well as their own as the penalty for withdrawing from a prospective sale between the acceptance of an offer and exchange of contracts. This would "act as a deterrent to gazumping while

not imposing unduly rigid controls on the market."

Under such a system buyers and sellers could be required to put up a pre-contract deposit, against which either side could claim costs if the other backs out.

Gazumping, where a seller agrees a price then goes back on it because he has been offered a better one, is growing as the housing market improves and prices rise.

Labour's plans closely mirror voluntary proposals to tackle gazumping announced last week by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Under the RICS

scheme, penalties would be linked to the purchase price on top of the seller's costs.

Other measures being canvassed by Labour include the extension of "lock-out agreements", whereby buyers and sellers agree to be bound by an agreed timetable.

Labour also raises the possibility of introducing the Scottish system of house-buying to England. In Scotland, buyers submit bids and the deal is binding once a bid is accepted. But Scottish buyers incur more upfront costs and can find themselves forced to take out expensive bridging loans.

Jobs threatened as Union goes on sale

By ADAM JONES

A DRASTIC restructuring at Union Plc, the financial services and trading group, put the company on the market yesterday. The changes also end the group's historic role as a discount house supplying liquidity to the banking system.

The group, founded in 1885, said it is pulling out of proprietary trading and

announced the departure of George Blunden, chief executive, and Ian Martin, managing director, as part of a wide cost-cutting exercise.

Graeme Knox, chairman, is to temporarily take over as executive chairman. A "substantial programme of redundancies" among Union's 170 staff is expected.

Union said the board has received several unsolicited takeover approach-

es in the last few weeks. A company statement added: "The interests of shareholders could be best served through a takeover."

Shareholders include Joe Lewis, the billionaire financier, who owns 24 per cent. Shares closed 8½p up at 95p.

Union said yesterday that 1996 operating losses were estimated at £1.7 million, despite a first-half pre-tax profit of £3.4 million. Mr Knox said

that 1996 interims had been swelled by a pension fund surplus.

After diversifying disastrously into leasing and property lending in the 1980s, the group is now active in the football sector as adviser to seven clubs. Its main businesses are UFM, a liquidity manager, and Union CAL, a derivatives broker. Talks to sell Aitken Campbell, its equity market-maker, are advanced.

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Scottish Life	58.51
We can arrange this for	25.02
Nationwide Life	83.50
Barclays Life	86.00
Friends Provident	88.99
Abbey National Life	101.40
Black Horse Life	101.68
Scottish Amicable	108.00
Scottish Life	137.40
We can arrange this for	53.30

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مركز امان لرامبل

Kvaerner may close Govan if it loses order

By GEORGE SIVELL

KVAERNER, the Norwegian shipbuilding and engineering group, is likely to close the Govan yard on the Clyde if it fails to win a big order. Closure of the yard would cost 1,400 jobs.

Kvaerner, which is now managed in London, said that it expects a decision on a big order later this week or early next week. If it fails to win it, Kvaerner said, it is "likely to close the yard". However, the group added: "We are working hard to seek opportunities for it."

The Norwegians said that losses at Govan in 1996 were "not satisfactory". Kvaerner yesterday reported disappointing results for 1996, registering a fall in profits before tax to Nkr750 million (£69.4 million), from Nkr2.4 billion, on sales up to Nkr58.6 billion, from Nkr30.2 billion. Profits for 1996 include a

profit from the sale of ships of Nkr344 million and profits of Nkr466 million from the sale of other assets. The previous year, however, also had Nkr787 million of one-off profits.

Erik Tonseth, Kvaerner's president and chief executive, said: "The 1996 results are most unsatisfactory. Cost reductions and restructuring will continue in 1997, but with continuing pressure on margins and short-term overcapacity in some of our businesses, it is unlikely that profits will improve significantly until the second half of 1997." However, the company president added: "There is room for guarded optimism in several of our markets, as demonstrated by the recent orders in oil and gas and pulp and paper."

Earnings per share fell to Kr19.57, from Kr40.78, although the dividend for the year remains unchanged at Kr6.50.

Kvaerner acquired Trafalgar House, the property, engineering and ships conglomerate in April 1996. The Norwegians had been expected to sell Trafalgar's Cunard cruise ships shortly after the deal was concluded, but appeared to be unable to find a buyer.

Kvaerner yesterday said that it had no plans to sell Cunard, adding that the first priority was to "get the business back into profitability". Cunard was said yesterday to have had a disappointing fourth quarter. Liquidity was described as satisfactory after a Kr6 billion disposal spree during 1996 from both the old Kvaerner and Trafalgar House.

Limits on society bonuses test law

By CAROLINE MERRELL

THE decision by building societies to restrict bonus payouts to the first named person on accounts may be one of the first tests of new laws aimed at ending discrimination against the disabled, Alistair Burt, the Social Security Minister, said today.

The effect of limiting payouts to the first named means many disabled, sick and elderly savers will not benefit from the free shares bonanza because they relying on trustees to operate their accounts.

Consumer organisations and campaigners claim this is discriminatory. In particular, they have criticised the Halifax for its stance. This week, Halifax members voted overwhelmingly in favour of turning the society into a bank.

Raising the issue at question time in the Commons, Liz Lynne (LD Rochdale) said that if the Disability Discrimination Act was the flagship of Government policy against the disabled, then it should be used against building societies such as the Halifax.

Mr Burt said: "There is a dispute of opinion as to whether or not the action by the building societies actually contravenes the Act. I believe someone is preparing to test it." He welcomed the Building Societies (Distributions) Bill brought by Douglas French (C Gloucester).

Nomura faces trading charge

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

THE Australian Securities Commission (ASC) is taking Nomura International, the Japanese investment bank, to court for allegedly manipulating the Australian stock market.

The case, the first of its kind in Australia, comes after an 11-month inquiry into alleged abnormal trading by Nomura on the Australian stock exchange and the Sydney Futures Exchange on March 29, 1996, when the all-ordinaries index fell 25 points in the final half hour of trading. The ASC alleges that Nomura engaged in market manipulation and "misleading and deceptive conduct" in relation to its unwinding of a large arbitrage position.

The arbitrage, ordered by Nomura's London office and carried out through its Hong Kong office, involved allowing 12,844 share price index futures contracts to expire and ordering the sale of A\$600 million (about

£300 million) of securities near the close of trading.

The ASC also alleges that Nomura engaged in "wash trading" — trading with itself — and that its conduct was calculated to create a "false or misleading appearance" with respect to the price of the futures contract.

The ASC is seeking both a declaration by the Federal Court of unlawful conduct and an injunction against Nomura to prevent conduct of this nature happening again.

Nomura rejected the allegations, saying: "Nomura International denies any wrongdoing, can see no legal or factual basis on which the ASC's allegations can be sustained and will be vigorously defending itself. The transactions referred to in the ASC allegations were legitimate stock index arbitrage transactions and took place in March 1996."

Think-tank condemns job fears

By OUR INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Government's claims that signing the European social chapter will put half a million people out of work are dismissed today by Britain's leading independent employment think-tank.

John Major has attacked the social chapter as a "Trojan horse" and said earlier this month that if Labour forms a Government and ends the UK opt-out from the EU's social chapter, 500,000 people in Britain would go on the dole.

However, the Employment Policy Institute today says that such claims are "overblown, inaccurate and unsearched". The institute says that in fact there is no clear evidence that employment protection measures such as the social chapter increase total unemployment.

EU regional aid should continue

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

EUROPE should sustain regional aid to Britain's still hard-pressed older industrial areas at its present level, local authorities from the traditional steel, coal and textile districts will urge today.

A new campaign group, covering more than 130 local authorities, will today caution against what it sees as a serious threat to EU regional aid in Britain posed by European enlargement.

Regional aid to Britain is secure until the end of 1999, at the end of the current planned European spending round. But with a range of Eastern European countries likely to join the EU, local authorities in Britain fear that they could draw off large amounts of the European funding currently used by older industrial areas in the UK.

Britain's traditional industrial areas presently receive

Caledonian deal helps Scottish TV to a high

By ERIC REGULY

THE acquisition of Caledonian Publishing and strong programming income helped to lift profits of Scottish Television, the ITV company, to record levels.

The company yesterday reported pre-tax profits before exceptional items of £28 million, up 40 per cent, in the year to December 31, on turnover from continuing operations of £114.7 million, up 16 per cent. Earnings per share were 31p, up from 27.4p.

Caledonian, which was bought last October for £120 million and which publishes *The Herald* and the *Evening Times* in Glasgow, contributed £1.7 million in operating profits. Analysts expect Caledonian to enhance company earnings significantly in 1997.

A string of new programme commissions, ranging from *McCallum to Snag and Co.*, boosted Scottish Television's operating profits from production by 43 per cent, to £3.3 million, their highest ever. Broadcasting also performed well, with a 24 per cent rise in profits, to £20.6 million.

Pre-tax profits including exceptional items were £61.2 million, against £20.2 million in 1995. The sale of the stakes in ITN and HTV, the ITV company in the west of England and Wales, provided the bulk of the gains.

Gus Macdonald, executive chairman, said that trading conditions so far this year were encouraging and that the launch of Channel 5 next month was "no cause for concern" to Scottish Television, where Gary Hughes is finance director and Andrew Flanagan is managing director. The City does not think that the new channel will pose a competitive threat to the ITV companies until 1998.

A final dividend of 13.2p, due on May 29, makes the total dividend 18.7p, up 15 per cent. The shares rose by 7.5p, to 637.5p.

Gus Macdonald, centre, with Gary Hughes, left, and Andrew Flanagan yesterday

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Philips seeks \$421m in cable stake sale

PHILIPS ELECTRONICS, the consumer electronics group, plans to raise about \$421 million through the sale of its 50 per cent interest in UPC, the biggest private cable operator in Europe. The interest is being sold to United International Holdings (UIH), the American company that is Philips' partner in the joint venture. UPC holds stakes in cable operators in 14 European countries, representing a total of more than 3 million households and nearly 2.1 million subscribers.

UIH is headquartered in Denver, Colorado, and is one of the main US cable operators active outside the United States. Philips, which is in the process of restructuring its diverse businesses to boost profits, indicated last year that the interest in UPC was no longer considered a core asset and was earmarked for disposal. The consideration includes about \$162 million in new UPC securities, which Philips will sell on after the disposal is completed, which is expected to be in the third quarter of this year. Richard de Lange, president of Philips Media, said: "Philips believes the future of UPC is best served by having investors who are dedicated to this type of industry."

Scottish Widows licence

SCOTTISH WIDOWS has been granted a licence to set up a life assurance company in Jersey that will provide lump sum investment products and regular savings pensions plans aimed at expatriates and high-net-worth mobile international investors. Products will be sold mainly through brokers based in the UK and overseas. The company is being set up under the new Insurance Business (Jersey) Law 1996 and is only the second such licence to be granted by the Jersey authorities. The new company will be called Scottish Widows International Ltd. The product range will be launched in the summer. Mike Ross, group chief executive, said the licence had been secured as part of a "strategic, long-term" plan.

Core valued at £73m

CORE GROUP, the drug developer based in Scotland, will be valued at £73 million when it joins the main exchange on Monday. The company, whose drugs are used in the controlled release of medicines in the body, is raising £23 million from the placing, which it plans to use to fund more of its prototype drugs through clinical trials. It expects to release its first products to the market next year. NM Rothschild has placed 9.2 million of its shares with institutions at 250p apiece.

Share incentives grow

SHARE incentives are spreading among growing businesses. More than half the companies floated on the Stock Exchange last year had share incentive schemes available to all established employees, according to a survey by Painsner & Co, the solicitor. Out of 63 companies first listed in 1996, 39 operate all-employee share schemes. But directors still do far better: 52 companies had Revenue-approved executive share schemes and even more had non-approved schemes for top executives.

Admiral's target

ADMIRAL, the computer services company, is targeting Belgium for its next acquisition after its cash pile grew 18 per cent last year to \$6.1 million. The company said that it is looking to bolster Delphy, the Belgian computer consultancy it bought two years ago. A disappointing performance from its software division held back growth in pre-tax profits to 11 per cent, taking the total to £11.2 million. Earnings nudged up by 0.9p to 11.6p per share. A final dividend of 1.54p makes a 2.44p total (1.88p), due on May 7.

Woolwich savers move

THE formerly neglected small saver is fast becoming the new darling of banks and building societies. The Woolwich yesterday halved the minimum investment on its Premier 30 account from £100 to £50 and lifted the rate for savers with balances of less than £500 from 1 per cent to 2.85 per cent. This is below the 5.75 per cent being offered by the newly launched Sainsbury's Bank on amounts of as little as £1. Tesco's Clubcard Plus pays 5.5 per cent again on deposits of £1 or more. Small savers have been shut out of many societies by higher minimum investment levels imposed to deter speculators.

SCS listing in danger

SCS SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS, which installs and repairs satellite television dishes, is in danger of being ejected from the Alternative Investment Market after Williams de Broer resigned as its nominated adviser. The company said it is in talks with possible replacements and hopes to name one soon. If it fails to do so within two months, it will be removed from the market. Williams de Broer's resignation comes one week after the London Stock Exchange completed its review of nominated advisers, which found fault with 25 City firms.

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US utility buys 25% of BG subsidiaries in Northern Ireland

A LEADING US utility company is taking a stake of almost 25 per cent in Northern Ireland's new gas industry.

BG, one of the successor companies to British Gas, is selling a 24.5 per cent interest in each of its two Northern Ireland subsidiaries to Brooklyn Union Gas Company, of New York, the fifth-largest gas company in America, for an undisclosed sum.

The investments in The Phoenix Natural Gas Company and Premier Transco, the pipeline company, are intended to give a boost to the emerging gas market in Northern Ireland.

Phoenix and Premier are leading the development of the natural gas market in Ulster. Phoenix is building a gas distribution system and natural gas market, initially in the Belfast area. About 70km of pipeline has already been constructed. Premier Transco owns and operates the gas pipeline linking Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Brooklyn Union is a gas distribution company that provides gas services to 1.1 million customers in New York. Its subsidiaries own diversified businesses in gas exploration



Varney: attractive projects

and production and in the Iroquois pipeline, which transports Canadian gas to the northeastern United States.

David Varney, chief executive of BG, said: "This transaction demonstrates BG's abilities to develop projects which are attractive to other international partners and to leverage its scarce resources in high-quality partnerships."

Sir Patrick Mayhew, Northern Ireland Secretary, said the investment by Brooklyn Union represented a significant boost for the Province.

Pressure on profits at mutuals

By SARA MCCONNELL

PROFITS at the Coventry and Newcastle building societies fell sharply last year as both societies improved savings and mortgage rates in a bid to highlight the benefits of mutual ownership.

The Coventry saw pre-tax profits nearly halve to £24 million in 1996 over those of the previous year after it introduced benefits costing £20 million. This cut the margin between what it pays savers and what it charges borrowers from 1.83 per cent to 1.25 per cent.

But the society says this "planned narrowing" resulted in a rise of almost 50 per cent in net mortgage advances to £216 million. Net retail savings receipts rose by nearly 44 per cent to £260 million.

At the Newcastle, pre-tax profits fell to £11.5 million in 1996, down from £14.7 million in 1995. The society has introduced a loyalty programme of mortgage discounts for borrowers of five years' standing "to demonstrate the value of mutuality in a tangible way".

Net lending rose by 67 per cent to £137 million, while net retail investment rose by 38 per cent to £107 million.

Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
Buyer	Seller	Buyer	Seller
Australia S	2.20	Malta	0.987
Austria S	20.16	Netherlands Gld	3.215
Belgium Fr	59.18	New Zealand	2.45
Canada S	2.231	Norway Kr	11.26
Cyprus Cyp	1.043	Portugal Esc	284.50
Denmark Kr	10.98	S Africa Ru	12.67
Finland Mk	8.70	Spain Ptas	241.50
France Fr	9.80	Sweden S	12.67
Germany Dm	2.98	Switzerland Fr	2.50
Greece Dr	4.44	Turkey Lira	205.00
Hong Kong S	13.26	USA \$	1.70
Ireland P	1.00		
Ireland P2	1.00		
Israel Shk	5.73		
Italy Lire	2850		
Japan Yen	213.10		

Bank	Bank
Buyer	Seller
Malta	0.987
Netherlands Gld	3.215
New Zealand	2.45
Norway Kr	11.26
Portugal Esc	284.50
S Africa Ru	12.67
Spain Ptas	241.50
Sweden S	12.67
Switzerland Fr	2.50
Turkey Lira	205.00
USA \$	1.70

Rates for small denomination bank notes supplied by Barclays Bank. Other rates apply to larger denominations, at close of trading currency.

Notes supplied by Barclays Bank. Other rates apply to interbank's cheque. Rates at close of trading yesterday.

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Strong success



Capita win to run cou

DIRE

□ Premier heads for trouble in Burma □ High street bank worries about bad debts □ Row over Avis flotation forecast

If only they were Tunbridge wells

□ GEOLOGY has played a cruel trick on the oil industry by locating much of the world's remaining reserves in politically unstable countries with human rights records that leave a great deal to be desired. Pulling oil out of the ground would be so much easier if the wells were just outside Bradford rather than Burma, in East Grinstead and not East Timor.

But nature has decreed that the oil companies must stand on the front line of the battle over investment ethics — a battle that has already claimed a notable victim in the form of Shell. Shell spent two years demonstrating exactly how not to deal with criticism of its operations in Nigeria, ignoring a few little local difficulties until opposition ran out of control.

Burma looks set to become the next cause célèbre for oil company ethical investors. Until recently, the country had been up there with North Korea and pre-pyramid scheme Albania as an inward-looking dictatorship, except without the Stalinist trimmings. There are reports that government forces are clearing villages and committing massacres in the south of the country as they try to suppress the Karen ethnic rebels. That region, echoes of Nigeria's Ogoniland, just happens to be the site of a new gas pipeline from Burma's offshore

fields to Thailand. Premier Oil, a British company, has taken a 30 per cent stake in the pipeline and can expect to find itself a target of campaigners. Premier is fortunate in that it has no retail outlets to be boycotted by protesters, and as the company has only taken an investment role in the project it is unlikely to face the direct anger of the local population — unlike operating partner Texaco. But the least Premier can expect is chaos at the annual meeting.

The danger for the companies involved is that they will fall back on the usual platitudes about "differing standards" — a direct quotation from Premier, and one all too reminiscent of the apologies trotted out by some of the world's worst regimes to justify violations of their people's human rights.

Companies have to accept that questions over the ethics of their investment policies are not going to go away. There is a fine line between foreign investment that improves the lot of the local population and investment that merely props up a pariah regime.

This should not rule out invest-

ment in countries with dubious regimes. Companies can act as a force for good, setting high employment standards, contributing to the local economy and gently using their leverage with the government to improve the lot of the local population. But the case cannot be taken for granted.

A willingness to be accountable, perhaps by publishing a clear code of practice showing what an individual company will and will not tolerate of its clients, would improve the standards of debate on both sides. It could also head off serious trouble. Premier, please note.

NatWest rides out the storm

□ AS THE southern half of the country has once again discovered, hatches are best battered down well in advance of the storm — it is too late once the chimney pots are already flying. To extend the meteorological metaphor further, for Derek Wanless, chief executive at NatWest Group, every silver

PENNINGTON



lining, in the form of a strong economy, has a cloud.

Last year's figures from NatWest, as we tirelessly must remember to call it, tell us little about the actual state of the business. There were losses and gains on disposals, and the previous year's numbers were restated. So much of yesterday's fall in the share price may merely have reflected the analysts' confusion.

But if NatWest says it can detect an approaching storm, as measured by a slowdown in economic growth next year, and so more business failures and private loans going sour, then the first few gusts were audible yesterday. Bad debts may have fallen by 4 per cent, but if you

strip out £100 million written off on Eurotunnel in 1995 the actual rise was closer to 17 per cent, as against a loan portfolio that rose by 10 per cent.

Of course, anyone who has been around since the 1987 hurricane knows this is how the bank lending cycle works. The suspicion must be that NatWest is keen to emphasise caution to the stock market because of questions over the rest of its strategy. There was certainly concern about higher spending on computers, £200 million ahead of forecasts over the next couple of years at a time when all banks are under pressure to cut UK banking costs.

There were doubts about the money being spent building up NatWest Markets, despite a good performance last year. And there was the inevitable foolish grumbling over the lack of a share buy-back. Against these negatives, the decision not to become embroiled in the battle for Scottish Amicable looks a wise one.

NatWest has made its strategy clear — whether you believe it is the correct one depends on your

view of the future of UK domestic and investment banking. But the bank is clearly determined to keep its competitive edge.

State of independence

□ ONE of the little fictions on the stock market that we are not supposed to discuss is the value of research that comes out of the so-called house broker. It is tacitly accepted that a company that pays broker's fees is entitled not to be kicked too hard by the resident analyst. There are heroic exceptions; there are also cases such as RJR Mining, where the house broker was the last to admit the bad news.

The trouble with huge international flotations such as Avis Europe, the car hire firm that publishes its pathfinder prospectus on Friday, is that they involve an awful lot of brokers, ten syndicate members in this case, and all fall into that tender trap. Except one; a row has blown up over some independent research into the company by UBS, which takes a less rosy view. On profits,

UBS is aiming a good £10 million below the others for the financial year about to begin. Avis claims a mathematical error, a failure to include interest savings from the float; UBS stays silent and supports the float, but has not withdrawn the research.

On prospects, UBS is worried about the proportion of profits that come from the business of buying cars from manufacturers at a discount and then reselling them. In accounting terms, this is a difficult area, but the collapse in value of such residuals, as they are called, has done for a number of leasing companies, such as Atlantic Computing, while the booking of discounts from manufacturers is a little too close for comfort to last year's débacle at Wickes.

This is not to say that Avis's accounting policies are anything but conservative, or that profits, excepting a rather unfortunate patch in 1994, have not shown good growth over the past 15 years. However, Avis does not help its case by refusing, for reasons of commercial confidentiality, it says, to talk about the terms on offer from the carmakers.

Profits from residuals could become an issue later — they certainly have for at least one of its rivals in that market. In which case, UBS can rightly say that it raised the matter first.

Strong pound hits EMI success with Spice Girls

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

WORLDWIDE success for the Spice Girls could not prevent EMI, the music company, from suffering a dip in third-quarter earnings as the soaring pound knocked £16 million off profits.

The all-girl group, who won two prizes at this week's Brit awards, were EMI's top act — selling seven million copies of their debut album and five million singles worldwide.

Profits, excluding tax and exceptional items, for the nine months ended December 31, fell 6 per cent to £293 million. At constant exchange rates, profits declined 1 per cent to £310 million.

But shares in the company recovered slightly after recent losses — climbing 4½p to close at £11.97 — after the com-

pany commented that the fourth quarter had started strongly.

Sir Colin Southgate, chairman, said that the company's release schedule was heavily weighted towards the final quarter, including new albums from Blur and Mansun, which have both made number one in the UK charts, and Eternal.

The company added that it expected to report full-year profits in the region of £580 million to £600 million and predicted it would suffer a £25 million currency hit.

Overall turnover fell 4.6 per cent to £2.57 billion. Operating profits in the music divisions fell 8 per cent to £285 million. The company was particularly badly hit by the on-going

music store war in the US and sales remained weak in continental Europe.

But EMI said that overall music growth remained robust, with a strong performance in emerging markets, and that it remained confident in the health of the music market in the coming years.

The third and final Beatles anthology sold 2.5 million units, taking total sales of the three-part anthology to 13 million copies. Other acts that sold more than a million units included The Artist Formerly Known As Prince and Deana Carter, the country singer.

Sales at HMV, the music retailer, increased 14 per cent to £671 million, representing like-for-like growth of 5.2 per cent. But operating profits

increased just 2 per cent, to £22 million, because of start-up costs at HMV Direct and HMV Germany. Dillons, the bookstore, increased sales 8 per cent. Profits from minority stakes fell 27 per cent, to £8.5 million, because of the impact of a weak yen on the contribution from Toshiba EMI.

EMI music publishing delivered strong results in North America, the UK, Brazil and Japan, with contributions from artists such as Tracy Chapman, Simply Red, Crowded House and Take That.

Finance charges fell 34 per cent, to £12.6 million, because of lower average net borrowings and disposals. The underlying tax rate declined slightly to 37.5 per cent.

'No penalty' over Tesco Clubcard

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

TERRY LEAHY, the new chief executive of Tesco, insisted yesterday that the supermarket group would not have to pay any compensation or penalty to NatWest after Tesco's early termination of NatWest's contract to run the Clubcard Plus debit card account.

The Royal Bank of Scotland is to take over the running of the accounts. An enhanced Clubcard Plus will be relaunched in May or June and will be followed by a credit card and then other financial services.

Mr Leahy said that Tesco and NatWest are discussing the handover of Clubcard Plus, and the settling of outstanding payments for services provided by the bank.

News Corp to use BT for ASkyB

By ERIC REGULY

THE growing links between British Telecom and The News Corporation were underlined yesterday when it emerged that the phone company, through MCI, will help to distribute the new ASkyB digital satellite television service in America.

BT last year agreed to buy MCI, the second largest long-distance carrier in the US, for £12 billion. The merger of the two companies should be completed by the autumn.

An MCI spokesman said: "We expect to market Sky to our base of 20 million customers. We will be able to offer a package that includes satellite TV, the Internet and long-distance services."

ASkyB was formed on Monday when News Corp. parent company of The Times, agreed to buy 50 per cent of EchoStar, the direct-to-home satellite

broadcaster, in exchange for assets, worth US\$1 billion, in its American Sky Broadcasting subsidiary. MCI, which owns 20 per cent of News Corp., will effectively have 10 per cent of the new company.

BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster that is 40 per cent owned by News International, News Corp's British subsidiary, and BT are also forming an alliance. They will be shareholders in the Interactive Services Company, which is being formed to subsidise the price of the digital set-top boxes that are to be ordered by BSkyB. In exchange for its investment, BT will share in the income generated by the interactive services.

In Australia, News Corp shares rose about 5.5 per cent, to more than A\$7, after the announcement that it and EchoStar are to join forces.

Elliot gains support on Salvesen

By PAUL DURMAN

SIR Gerald Elliot, the former chairman of Christian Salvesen, yesterday claimed he already had the support of 14 per cent of shareholders in his bid to block the distribution company's demerger.

In a letter to shareholders, Sir Gerald urged Salvesen's owners to vote against the company's plans to pay a special dividend of £100 million and to demerge Aggreko, the fast-growing power rental business. He said the proposals to break up Salvesen were "ill-judged and defeatist".

Sir Gerald, great grandson of Salvesen's founder, accused the company's management of mishandling last year's takeover approach from Hays.

He proposes to install John Grant, former finance director of LucasVarity, the car components group, as chief executive, to carry out a strategic review.



Rod Aldridge, left, with Paul Pindar, managing director, achieved record results

Capita wins £32m contracts to run council computers

By FRASER NELSON

CAPITA, the business support services group, has swept up three remaining local government contracts that were up for renewal in 1997, adding a further £32 million to its order book.

The company, Britain's largest independent council tax collector, has secured extensions to its contracts to run the county council computer systems for Kent and Wiltshire. It has also won an eight-year extension to collect and process taxes payable to Mendip District Council.

The extensions were announced as the company returned record results for 1996,

coming in ahead of the City's expectations. Efficiencies drawn from pooling new administration contracts into its processing centres helped pre-tax profit to rise 31 per cent to £12.3 million, on sales 29 per cent ahead at £112 million. Earnings were 14.3p a share (11.8p). The dividend is 4.8p (3.9p), with a final 3.2p payable on April 29.

The results were helped by October's acquisition of Recruitment & Assessment Services (RAS), the former government agency that has exclusive control over new recruits to the Civil Service.

Rod Aldridge, chief executive, said that RAS's "fast track" entry process was winning orders from private businesses looking for new staff. More than 20 per cent of successful RAS candidates are being placed in businesses outside the Civil Service.

While public sector contracts fell to two thirds of sales, Mr Aldridge said the company, which administers nursery school vouchers and the theory part of driving tests, was not retreating from the sector.

Bureaucracy is hitting central government more than local government, he said.

Shire pays £55m for US drug developer

By PAUL DURMAN

SHIRE Pharmaceuticals looks set to lift its stock market value to almost £200 million by buying a US drug development company for an initial payment of up to £55.5 million. Shire, valued at £106.6 million when it floated a year ago, is buying Pharmavene, which pulled out of a Nasdaq listing last year after the market turned against US biotechnology stocks. Shire may have to pay a further £49 million to Pharmavene's vendors over the next few years, depending on the success of various development projects.

Pharmavene specialises in drug delivery, developing improved versions of existing drugs. It is working on a treatment for viral infections that will be more easily absorbed.

Shire said that Pharmavene's approach was similar to its own, avoiding development risk and concentrating on commercialisation. The acquisition will give Shire a product pipeline of 30 projects.

Shire is helping to fund the deal by raising £115 million with a one-for-ten placing and open offer of new shares at 24p. The existing shares slipped 3½p, to 23½p, yesterday. Shire will pay the vendors up to £15.3 million in cash. The remaining £40.2 million of initial consideration will be in shares. Shire yesterday reported a £100,000 loss for the half year to December 31, on sales down from £12.1 million to £9.9 million. The slide from a £4.6 million profit last year was because of the absence of a payment received in connection with a treatment for Alzheimer's disease.

Sema profits grow 35%

SEMA, the Anglo-French computer services group which last month bought the former British Rail ticket operating system for £27 million, picked up the business cheaply, according to analysts (Fraser Nelson writes).

One analyst said: "Sema is sitting on a goldmine. It picked up the business for £27

million when it has turnover of £87 million — and margins pretty much the same as the group's average. That is a very good deal." Sema's other acquisitions helped the company to lift pre-tax profits to £50 million, a rise of 35 per cent over the year.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Wall Street record fails to ease investors' worries

THERE was a brief celebration for Wall Street's overnight record-breaking run but, with several hurdles to cross today, few investors yesterday were ready to commit fresh funds to the market.

There will be a collective sigh of relief if today's gilt auction involving £2.5 billion of longer-dated stock is comfortably subscribed. In addition, there will be further apprehension later in the day as Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, gives his testimony on the US economy to Congress. The City will be wanting to see the reaction of US Treasury bonds before planning its next move.

This, combined with political worries ahead of tomorrow's Warrall South by-election, kept investors sidelined although the squaring-up of book positions and a stream of major trading statements boosted turnover to \$21.6 billion shares.

With the Dow Jones industrial average failing to consolidate its early gains, the FT-SE 100 index finished well down on the day. After touching 4,357.9, it closed 13.6 up at 4,344.7.

Among leaders, BAT Industries advanced 13.2p to 546.1p, reflecting recent demand on the other side of the Atlantic for Philip Morris.

Yorkshire Electricity rose 10p to 891.1p. That compares with the 927p a share being offered by Yorkshire Holdings, owned jointly by American Electric Power of Ohio and Public Services of Colorado, US power generators.

National Westminster Bank tumbled 36p to 776.1p after full-year figures came in at the lower end of City expectations. Unlike the other banks that have already reported, NatWest reported a drop in pre-tax profits after charges of £905 million relating to the disposal of Bancorp in the US and the cost of restructuring. Lord Alexander, chairman, was also quick to rule out the possibility of NatWest making a counterbid for Scottish Amicable, which already has bids on the table from Abbey National, down 10p to 769.1p, and Prudential Corporation, 3.2p firmer at 563p.

The rest of the bank sector spent a nervous day awaiting today's full-year numbers from Standard Chartered, down 12p to 770p. Brokers are forecasting pre-tax profits



Richard Saville, left, Joseph Dwyer, centre, and Dennis Brant, deputy chief executive, of George Wimpey, which slipped 1.1p

range from £855 million to £874 million compared with £661 million last time. The City will want to know what impact the death of Deng Xiaoping will have on future trading. Standard is one of the few banks licensed to trade in the Chinese currency.

Elsewhere in the sector, Royal Bank of Scotland shed 9p to 613.1p, and Bank of

Scotland 8p to 338.1p, while there were gains for Barclays, up higher at £112.2, HSBC, up 15.1p to £15.79, and Lloyds TSB, 8p better at 510p.

A badly handled buying order squeezed WPP Group 15p higher at 268.1p. Two parcels of 500,000 shares went through at 253p and 253p. Another line of 500,000 shares went through at 263p. Last

improvement in the retail sector generally. That comment lifted Great Universal Stores 5p to 68p, DFS 10.1p to 590.1p, Debenhams 11p to 528.1p, MFI 8p to 192p, and Flying Colours 6p to 252.1p.

Emap, the troubled publisher, was again beaten a retreat with a fall of 12.1p at 77.3p after the loss of David Arscott. He is joining the board of

United News & Media, 5.1p better at 709.1p.

Thorn fell 13.1p to 189.1p as the City began to have second thoughts about Monday's third-quarter setback for profits. But there was grudging approval to the other half of the recent demerger with EM1 firming 4.1p to £11.97.

George Wimpey, Britain's biggest housebuilder, slipped 1.1p to 140p after news that doubling its profits last year. The group, under Joseph Dwyer, chairman and chief executive, and Richard Saville, finance director, even went so far as to ally shareholders' fears about mounting debts and outline moves to build up the landbank.

A profits warning left Neepsend 8p down on the day at 33.1p. The engineer said results for the year would fall short of market expectations, with profits failing to match last year's.

Profit warnings also left Sep Industries 10.1p lower at 26p and Alzomase 53.1p at 318p. Unilever, one of the few remaining discount houses, rose 8.1p to 95p after reporting several bid approaches.

News of a bid approach boosted Mackie International Group 20p to 180p. But it warned the speculators that any offer for the company may not exceed 160p.

Drew Scientific touched 58.1p in early trade on talk of a possible bid approach. Profit-taking left the shares 4.1p down at 47.1p by the close.

Scottish Television responded to the 40 per cent jump in pre-tax profits with a rise of 7.1p to 637.1p.

GILT-EDGED: Prices traded in narrow limits for much of the session, with investors unwilling to commit themselves ahead of today's auction and Alan Greenspan's testimony to Congress.

Turnover was boosted in the futures pit as investors rolled over open positions in the March future into June as the long gilt closed three ticks firmer at £113.32. A total of 107,000 contracts were completed.

Treasury 8 per cent 2015 put on £2.32 to end the day at £106.17. While Treasury 8 per cent 2000 hardened a tick to £104.32.

NEW YORK: Profit-takers moved in after Monday's rally to end the day lower and by midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 19.63 points at 6,988.57.

Closing Prices Page 30

MARKS & SPENCER: SCOPE FOR IMPROVEMENT

Source: Datastream

Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb

Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb

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MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 6988.57 (-19.63)
S&P Composite 498.71 (-1.57)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 19075.07 (+173.08)
Hang Seng 13520.26 (+144.57)

Amsterdam:
EEX Index 750.19 (+16.68)
AEX 2500.18 (+18.2)

Frankfurt:
DAX 3331.21 (+49.03)
Scale 2201.07 (+32.02)

Singapore:
General 2201.07 (+32.02)
Scale 2201.07 (+32.02)

Brussels:
General 1180.23 (+154.70)
CAC-40 3407.72 (+30.87)

Zurich:
SIX 942.10 (+4.02)
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London:
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TEMPUS

Out of the cul-de-sac

GEORGE WIMPEY was in ebullient mood yesterday. In the words of its chairman, last year's deal with Tarmac has enabled the housebuilder to escape from a cul-de-sac. By swapping its construction and quarrying divisions for McLean Homes, Wimpey has been able to increase margins and double profits, and to make the most of a strongly recovering housing market. Even the balance sheet turned out better than the City expected.

Profits look set almost to double again this year to perhaps £60 million, helped by savings from the acquisition of McLean and the reorganisation into 38 local companies. Wimpey expects to cut its borrowings further by selling off £110 million of unwanted properties and other assets.

This will help finance land-buying and some worries remain. Wimpey insists that

concerns over its short landbank are overdone. Wimpey Homes was able to increase the size of its land bank by 1100 plots and McLean reduction was blamed on Tarmac suspending investment.

All the time, land pressures mean McLean will build less than the desired 6,000 homes this year. It also remains to be seen whether Wimpey is right to be confident about clearing planning hurdles. The group is exposed to land price inflation of 5-10 per cent.

Other worry is the election. Wimpey's belief is that there will only be a brief hiatus for a week or two either side of polling day, with margins still low. Wimpey should benefit substantially from rising house prices. The shares have recently bounced and may move sideways ahead of the election. Longer term prospects look good.

Wimpey is merely catching up. There are many reasons why it does not need miracles to keep up the growth. Its added attraction is its presence on the edge of markets in Hong Kong, Germany and the US. If it breaks into any one of these, the potential is huge. The shares have had a good run, but they are worth holding.

Unlike competitors, Sema is winning bodies as it wins

contracts. With an order book 66 per cent ahead, it does not need miracles to keep up the growth. Its added attraction is its presence on the edge of markets in Hong Kong, Germany and the US. If it breaks into any one of these, the potential is huge. The shares have had a good run, but they are worth holding.

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THE TIMES



CITY DIARY

Breakfast iffiness

MINISTERS are splashing out on business breakfasts. In answer to a parliamentary question yesterday, Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, said that ministers have spent £78,000 on power breakfasts.

The Prime Minister can look forward to a letter from Barbara Roche, the Shadow Small Business Minister, asking him to justify spending taxpayers' money for ministers to breakfast in marginal seats. "Small firms are the target of these visits," she said. "The ones I meet want rather more from this Government in the run up to the general election than coffee and croissants and ministers who are has-beens."

Wrong-footed

IN Singapore for the opening of the latest branch of Harry Ramsden's fish and chip shop, John Barnes, the chairman, was mightily impressed with the VIP treatment. Ushered into his hotel, Barnes was whisked up to the penthouse suite, where chocolates and flowers were in abundance. Then he spotted a letter from the hotel football team asking if he would pose alongside them for a celebrity photograph. "I turned up in the foyer at the agreed time and their faces fell," he says, adding that he looks more like an ageing Ryan Giggs than the Jamaican-born captain of Liverpool.



"I think it means proceed with caution."

Eton connection

SIR Denis Mahon goes on public display today. The great-nephew of one of the original founders of the merchant bank Guinness Mahon, whose collection of Italian Baroque paintings is currently on loan to the Sainsbury wing of the National Gallery, offers us a brief insight into the art collector's personal life. The ten sketches by Luca Giordano that hang in the exhibition were bought from Lord Shrewsbury to help him to purchase his carriage for the coronation of The Queen in 1953. Sir Denis's good relations with Lord Shrewsbury predate this gesture — Lord Shrewsbury was Sir Denis's lag at Eton.

JOHN GIBSON, the Glasgow-based regional manager of the Stock Exchange, mysteriously took leave of his job last Friday. Sally Everett, formerly regional co-ordinator at the SE, replaces him from next week. The SE refuses to comment on the departure of her predecessor, referring to it as a "personnel matter".

Dodgy presence

PROTESTS at the success of the Spice Girls at this week's Brit Awards reached the motor industry when Dodge, the popular singing combo, apparently boycotted the event in favour of the What Car? Awards. The group is said to have taken a table for the venue in the Great Room at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London's Mayfair, but dinner guests — seemingly a generation more likely to recognise the Monkees — were apparently unaware of one of the nation's up-and-coming supergroups.

MORAG PRESTON

Banking on revolution to banish climate of decay

The World Bank is hoping to improve its poor image with yet more radical internal surgery. Bronwen Maddox reports

Permanent revolution is not a policy that the World Bank would recommend for its clients in the developing world. Yet last week, James Wolfensohn, the Bank's president, announced that the development organisation would impose on itself its fourth radical restructuring in ten years in a new bid to halt years of listless decline.

Like three previous attempts at reform by Mr Wolfensohn's predecessors, the plan is expensive: it will cost up to \$250 million, cut up to 700 jobs and push up operating costs for two years. Like its precursors, it is billed as decisive, the silver bullet that finally dispels criticism that the Bank has become rigid, ineffective and prone to ill-considered lending fads.

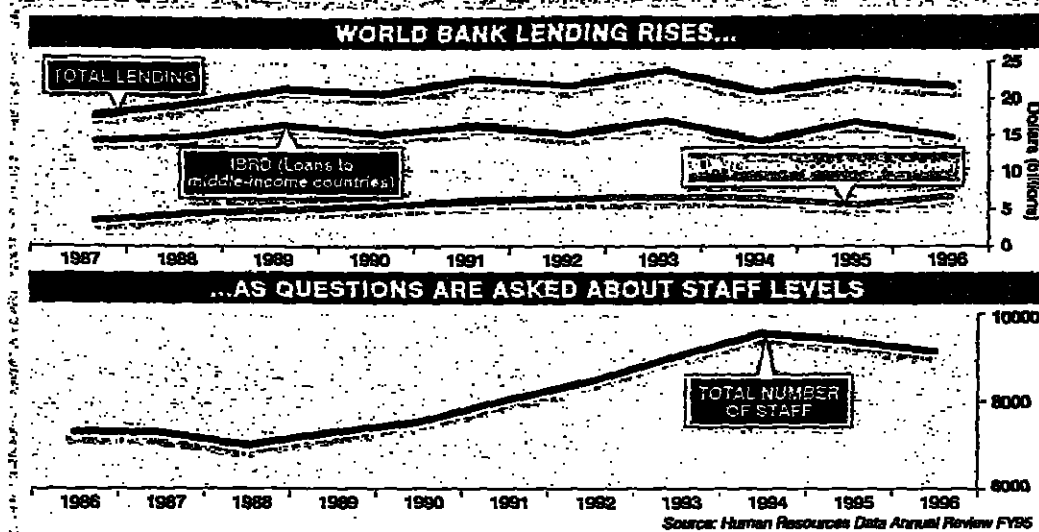
For Mr Wolfensohn, openly frustrated with the slow pace of change since his appointment two years ago, his reputation depends on the success of these reforms. For the Bank, its survival into the next century is at stake, as it struggles to convince rich donor countries that it still has a role.

When the World Bank was founded in 1945, its mission was to combat poverty and promote economic development. From the start its lending philosophy and economic recommendations had a distinctly American cast, which John Maynard Keynes foresaw when he lobbied unsuccessfully to have it based outside Washington. That tone remains; Joseph Stiglitz, its new chief economist, bluntly said that Europe as well as developing countries should learn from the US model of government.

In the wake of the Second World War, Western European countries were its first clients. Five decades later, roads built with Bank funds criss-cross the developing world and dams churn out electricity from its rivers. The Bank also claims a role in the dramatic reduction in worldwide infant mortality and the extension of life expectancy.

However, critics of the Bank's record have grown steadily. Last year just 70 per cent of completed projects were judged successful, an improvement on five years ago but a decline from the early level of 80 per cent. Despite repeated assaults on its tiers of bureaucracy, staff numbers have also risen to more than 9,000.

But the Bank's most painful disappointment is the failure of many of its plans for sub-Saharan Africa. Professor Stiglitz observes that in the 1960s and 1970s, the Bank let African governments assume a central role in spending development funds which, given their lack of experience, was unrealistic. More recently, the Bank has also been attacked for taking too little regard of the local consequences of its projects, and for neglecting environmental concerns until the Green Movement gained political clout in the 1980s. Mark Malloch Brown, Bank spokesman, acknowledges



these charges, but says: "We were a little bit smarter and a little bit less wrong than others in development." David Dollar, a senior researcher, adds that "the influence of the World Bank on countries' policies is greatly exaggerated. Our big sins in Africa were providing financial assistance to countries with bad policies — but the Bank didn't cause the bad policies."

However, the Bank is running out of time. It is now competing with private banks, which have become more confident in lending to developing countries and are skimming off the best projects. Last year, private capital injections to developing countries reached \$230 billion, a sixfold increase since 1990, dwarfing the Bank's annual commitments of about \$22 billion.

At the same time, governments of industrialised countries have pared back their donations to development; in total, official aid fell by 9 per cent last year, to about \$50 billion, the lowest in real terms for 23 years. For two thirds of the Bank's annual lending, the IBRD programmes for the better-off developing countries — these constraints do not yet matter. The IBRD has financed itself since the late 1980s with the interest and repayments from its own loans. However,

the Bank's IDA programme to the poorest countries, the remaining one third, needs annual injections.

The challenges facing the Bank are encapsulated in the strained relationship with the US. Its contributions to IDA, nominally one fifth of the total, have been stalled by Congress, which is sceptical of the Bank's effectiveness and infuriated by its rising costs. Mr Wolfensohn says he is confident that President Clinton's commitment to make good the US's promises to IDA will survive Congress. But others in the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee, a congressional body with influence on the outcome, say they may wait for evidence of real reform.

Mr Wolfensohn, 63, a forceful, charming, Australian-born financier, and now a naturalised American, was well aware of those challenges when he took the job. He overestimated the rate at which the Bank's 9,000 staff, 90 per cent based in Washington, would be prepared to change. In March 1996, he complained despairingly of a "glass wall" blocking his efforts: "How can we change the atmosphere? How can we move from cynicism, distrust and distance to risk taking an involvement?"

Chips with everything offer sweet sensation to German investors

Oliver August watches the test run at Siemens's new Tyneside factory



Jürgen Gehrels was enticed by Britain's low wage levels

Locally it is known as "the billion pound chip factory". To the rest of British industry, it is the biggest completed inward investment project in Britain. Siemens, the German electronics group, has built Europe's most modern semiconductor factory on Tyneside.

The first test run has now begun and chips will soon be exported around the globe. "This marks the start of production at the £1.1 billion plant," the company said yesterday.

Only ten years ago such an event would have been unthinkable. The Tyneside site is a living monument to the scale of change that British industry has undergone. The Siemens factory overlooks the ailing Swan Hunter shipyard, formerly one of the biggest employers in the region. Today, Siemens styles itself as the "number one employer in the neighbourhood". A total of 1,100 people will eventually work in the factory — 550 have already been hired.

The new jobs and the prospect of becoming the silicon valley of Europe have rejuvenated the area.

The decision to base the plant on Tyneside was taken in August 1995. The cornerstones were laid a few months later, equipment was in place last November and mass production will start this summer — only two years after the project was begun.

Helmut Brunner, the German executive director, said: "We are on schedule and we met all our targets." He is one of the 50 German managers who supervised the swift construction of the plant. By the end of this year, however, control over the 100-acre site will pass into local hands.

The type of microchip produced is called a wafer. It looks like a slice of salami, but is in reality a micro-thin sliver of silicon, which is made in 370 separate stages. This week the entire process was for the first time operated simultaneously, and the first salami slices are now ready to be served.

Initially the weekly output will be limited to 1,700 wafers, to be increased to 6,000 at a later date when the production run has been fine-tuned. The so-called "raw process" — the minimum time it takes to make a wafer from start to finish — is 17 days. It is, however, more efficient to stretch the process to 35 to 40 days.

Herr Brunner claimed that production times would be one of the fastest in the industry. Speed seems to be his main focus, rather than the stereotypically German qualities of efficiency and order.

The local population has certainly been impressed with the speed with which the plant

was put up. A cabbie dropping visitors off at the factory gate said: "It's faster than Germany because they've got Newcastle Brown Ale to keep them going."

The factory is a steel construction which contains not a single ounce of concrete. At its heart is a 4,000 sq ft "clean room". Here the wafers are put together in a totally dust-free environment.

The space suits worn by staff may soon be discarded. A new system called SMIF (Standard Mechanical Interface) will allow employees to work in shell suits instead.

SMIF involves glass briefcases in which wafers can be transported dust-free from one machine to the next. All machines are enclosed in their

own miniature "clean rooms" and only when the wafers are inside are they taken out of their cases. The machine operators can eat their lunch while working. The benefits are obvious, but the technology is almost unknown in Britain.

The clean room gives the impression that it was designed by overzealous housewives. To enter, one has to put a small plastic bag on each foot. A second set of bags has to be worn in the visitors' gallery overlooking the room, despite the thick glass separating it from dirty intruders. All employees inside the room are dressed in colour-coded space suits to minimise the amount of dust and to be easily identified.

The opening of the Tyneside

plant is a main plank of Siemens's strategy for the UK. The group is now a leading UK electronics company with a turnover of £1.5 billion last year. Plans already exist to develop another plant next to the newly operational one.

What is holding back Siemens so far is the dismal state of the global semiconductor market. It has annual sales worldwide of \$200 billion. Siemens, headed by Jürgen Gehrels and which employs 19,000 people around the globe, currently sells \$3 billion of semiconductors a year, but hopes to treble this in the next three years.

Considerable fluctuations, however, present players in the world chip market with quite a challenge. Prices for some of Siemens's chips recently fell from DM20 to DM4. But Heinrich Hamann, a senior director, is confident that this will be corrected. He said: "Demand from suppliers is balancing out now. Volume is coming back. We hope that the price erosion will be stopped as well."

But why did Siemens decide to set up a venture that is so dependent on highly skilled staff in the North East? Simple, said Herr Hamann. Wages are low compared with Germany and people are so desperate for work that they are happy to receive the extensive training that they need to work in a semiconductor plant. Graduates start on £15,000 and engineers in non-managerial positions can earn up to £45,000. Salaries include a 40 per cent shift premium. While the UK plant was being built over the past year, the new employees were sent to Siemens sites in Germany and Austria to learn and familiarise themselves with new techniques.

Lew Aiviss, the personnel director, has something of a Germanic disciplinarian streak, despite appearing to be an unassuming Englishman. Workers will not be allowed to wear make-up, smoke or work flexi-time. They have to work 12-hour shifts on four out of every eight days. He said: "We want to discipline our people. Cleanliness is so important."

Mr Aiviss added: "We work to help overcome the problem that the North East has the highest unemployment levels in England." He doesn't mention that the British Government is shelling out sweeteners worth about £200 million to make such work a lucrative pursuit for the company. An advertising hoarding at Hadrian Business Park, where the factory is situated, shouts "goldmine for sale". With a little luck, Siemens goldmine will benefit everyone involved.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Restoration of Binns stores would need like minds

From Mr F. T. Pattinson
Sir, I can sympathise with what Mr B. J. H. Mathison has to say (Business Letters, February 11) about the pre-war Binns stores.

I started an apprenticeship with Binns on September 1, 1939 having given up a legal career (with a practice in Darlington) so to do.

In April 1942 I joined the RAFVR, which interrupted, until 1946, my apprenticeship with Binns. After a short stay

with Binns I went to college in London.

During my short post-war stay with Binns rumours were abound that the House of Fraser wanted to take over the Binns Group. Such a takeover would give the House of Fraser its largest stake in England.

The House of Fraser, under the chairmanship of Hugh Fraser, later to become Lord Fraser, eventually, after a long and bitter struggle, took over

the Binns Group. Binns soon began to alter after the House of Fraser had bought it.

If Mr Mathison has ideas of restoring what is left of the original Binns Group to its past eminence I would suggest that he should make overtures to the John Lewis Partnership, or another like-minded business!

Yours faithfully,
F. T. PATTINSON,
532 Baradon Walk,
London, W11.

Cascade cause and effect of taxation

From Mr M. R. Sharmar
Sir, One of the long-term aims of this Government is said to be the abolition of inheritance tax (IHT) and capital gains tax (CGT), in order to allow wealth to "cascade down the generations".

Abolition of IHT would obviously increase the amount of wealth which would reach the next generation, but the

question is when? In the absence of IHT, there would be no tax incentive to make lifetime gifts, and many potential donors might prefer to retain their assets until death. At present, one of the most powerful incentives to make timely lifetime gifts is the seven-year IHT risk.

Often the biggest obstacle to lifetime gifts is CGT. Total abolition of CGT is probably not the answer, as this would be likely to revive the tax avoidance industry's in-

terest in schemes for converting taxable income into tax-free gains.

Retention of the present IHT rules, combined with abolition or deferral of CGT on gifts, would be more likely to encourage early lifetime gifts, and thus promote the cascade effect.

Yours faithfully,
M. R. SHARMAR
Biddle & Co.,
1 Gresham Street,
EC2.

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مركز من لاصح

Equities higher, gilts unmoved

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	999	998	99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Trocadero pair may float their Enid Blyton business

By Jason Nisse

NIGEL WRAY and Nick Leslau, the entrepreneurs behind Burford and Trocadero, are considering floating the Enid Blyton company, owner of the rights to the late author's books for children, with a market value of more than £50 million.

This compares with the £14.7 million that Trocadero paid for the business last year. Trocadero has since renegotiated publishing rights to the books with Reed, taking back merchandising of Noddy from the BBC, and it is near to securing a deal to make a version of Noddy for US television.

The business made profits of £650,000 last year, and Trocadero believes that this can be more than tripled within a couple of years.

If the business floats, it will be the fourth public company in which Mr Wray and Mr Leslau are involved. There will be a fifth if they float Nottingham Forest, the football club in which they are investors. Trocadero, quoted on the AIM, is to join the main market at the end of this year, and the group is looking for a chief executive to replace Mr Leslau, and a finance director, to take over from Julian Gleck, who is also at Burford.

Trocadero's first results as a separate company were disappointing, with pre-tax profits down a third to £1.23 million and earnings per share down from 0.58p to 0.16p.

Mr Leslau admitted that the main problem was with Segaworld, the interactive theme park run by Segal at the Trocadero, the London leisure complex, which had a poor launch. If Segal does not achieve £6 million of annual turnover by September 1999, Trocadero has a right to evict the Japanese giant. It is thought that only £1 million people will visit Segaworld this year, against previous targets as high as two million. Spending per person is £8.50, against projections of £15.

Trocadero is bringing in new tenants, including The Giant Drop — a 125ft free-fall ride — and a 3-D cinema.



Nick Leslau, left, and Nigel Wray may float their Enid Blyton business and aim to help Noddy on to television in the US

GRE's £1bn war chest raises fears of a costly bid battle

By Gavin Lumsden

SHARES in Guardian Royal Exchange, the insurance group, slipped 4½p to 23½p yesterday after John Robins, group chief executive, announced a £1 billion war chest to fund acquisitions at home and abroad.

This raised fears that it could get embroiled in an expensive bidding contest with the likes of GE Capital and the Prudential if Acta Equity & Law goes up for sale.

Mr Robins surprised the market with a final dividend of 6.6p, due on 1 July, bringing the total for the year to 10p, up

11.1 per cent. He also said that GRE's net asset value, including life-insurance value, was £2.5 billion, giving a NAV per share of 28p, higher than expected.

In addition, he revealed for the first time that the shareholder stake in the life business was worth £302 million, equal to 33p per share in asset terms. However, Mr Robins blamed restructuring costs and a dramatic rise in weather-related claims for a £59 million fall in trading profits.

Trading profits had fallen from £340 million in 1995 to

£281 million last year, he said, although the group had kept premium income from worldwide general insurance broadly level at £2.9 billion.

Mr Robins said the decline in profits included the £39 million cost of merging RAC Insurance Services and the commercial insurance business of Legal & General, which it acquired last year. Guardian Insurance is shedding 350 jobs and closing 12 offices. Weather-related and subsidiary claims pushed underwriting losses in the UK up £12 million, to £32 million.

However, Mr Robins expected Guardian Direct, the telephone-based insurance arm launched in 1994, to break even this year. In-fare policies doubled to 275,000 and Guardian had underwritten a further 233,000 policies since acquiring RACIS. The company had expanded into Northern Ireland last year and would open in South Africa next month, he added.

Guardian Income increased premium income 69 per cent and now has a 4 per cent share among specialist intermediaries. The group's life business

made a profit of £31 million, on top of a 22 per cent rise in new business from corporate pensions and protection.

Exceptionally severe weather also doubled losses in North America to £26 million, although the group has completed capital restructuring of the GRE Insurance Group and built a new motor insurance centre in Indianapolis.

The group raised £140 million through the sales of Guardian Re, its Swiss reinsurance company, its Trade Indemnity stake and Aquis property development portfolio.

Mersey Docks dispute costs group £800,000

By Sarah Cunningham

THE prolonged Liverpool docks dispute cost the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company £800,000 in operating profit last year, it was revealed yesterday.

The dispute, which began in September 1995, involves 329 dockers dismissed for refusing to cross a picket line. The group repeated yesterday that its offer of £28,000 per man, on condition that each one of them be given the chance to respond via a secret ballot, is final. The offer has not been accepted.

In the year to December 30 pre-tax

profits were down 6.3 per cent to £29.7 million. Operating profit rose from £37.6 million to £43.8 million, but the trading losses and closure costs of the cross-Channel Eurolink totalled £9.1 million. The service was closed on December 1.

Earnings per share were 22.7p (24.48p). The proposed final dividend of 8.75p (7.85p), payable on May 8, gives a full-year dividend of 12.75p (11.5p).

The group plans to spend £48 million on new facilities at Liverpool and Medway during 1997.

US economy confidence

CONSUMERS in America remain sanguine about the prospects for the US economy and business opportunities, the Conference Board reported yesterday.

While the board's confidence index dipped slightly in February, falling to 114.4 from 118.7 in January, the New York research group said its latest survey showed that consumers were "clearly upbeat" about current business activity.

The survey is based on a representative sample of 5,000 households.

Heron to build chain of European leisure parks

By Sarah Cunningham

HERON, the unlisted property company run by Gerald Ronson, is expanding into the European leisure market with a £135 million development of five sites in Spain and France.

The group recently announced that it was investing £300 million on property in the UK and Spain and on a land development scheme in Wales. It now intends to develop leisure and retail parks in Madrid, on two sites in Paris and a further two in the north of France. The Madrid project will be located close to the city's main ring road and cover 250,000 sq ft. It will

include a multiplex cinema and a factory outlet, and should create about 1,000 jobs. Heron said. The French developments will each be about 200,000 sq ft. Heron said it is in advanced discussion with leading leisure groups and cinema operators about prospective tenants.

Gerald Ronson, the chief executive of Heron, said: "We intend to build up the Heron International leisure division as a series of branded parks across Europe." Further projects in France, Spain and other European countries are planned.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Ricardo hit by costs of shake-up in US

RICARDO GROUP, the UK automotive design consultancy, yesterday reported pre-tax losses of £13.7 million for the half-year to December 30, reflecting the high cost of the restructuring of its troubled operations in America. Losses included exceptional charges of £16.3 million from the disposal of the non-automotive businesses, comprising a £2.6 million charge to cover costs and the discount of the sale against assets and a £13.7 million goodwill adjustment.

The company said pre-exceptional profits were little changed at £2.5 million (£2.4 million) on turnover that rose 13 per cent to £52.1 million. Normalised earnings were 3.6p a share (3.4p) and the dividend was held at 2p. The shares were unchanged at 133½p yesterday. Rodney Westhead, who became chief executive in November upon the dismissal of Christopher Ross, said the company would now focus on its automotive engineering consultancy business.

Ford boost for Swansea

FORD plans to invest £25 million at its plant in Swansea, South Wales, safeguarding 1,100 jobs, the company announced yesterday. The funding will enable the plant to increase its existing output of wheel hubs and drums and to expand into producing brake discs. The plant exports components to Europe and North America. Last year 450,000 individual components were made at the factory, including axles and transmission arms. Its products can be found in most Ford marques from the Ka to the Scorpio.

Cobham subsidiary deal

SARGENT FLETCHER (SFI), the US subsidiary of Cobham, the UK aerospace engineering company, has completed the \$4 million purchase of the aircraft external metal fuel tank business of Derlan Industries. SFI has acquired the right and title to substantially all of the assets, inventory, order book, intellectual property and manufacturing rights. The product line will be moved to SFI's El Monte site in southern California and will help to consolidate SFI's position in the North American and worldwide markets.

Jermyn assets rise

JERMYN INVESTMENT PROPERTIES reported a 23 per cent rise in net asset value to 223.3p a share, fully diluted, in 1996. Consolidated investment assets rose to £53.31 million from £29.73 million, helped by acquisitions. At the pre-tax level profits rose to £1.32 million from £1.07 million and earnings improved to 5.8p a share from 5.49p. A final dividend of 3.1p a share lifts the total to 5.5p, from 4.5p in the previous year. Shares in Jermyn Investment Properties rose 4p to 167½p.

Alumasc disappoints

SHARES of Alumasc fell 53½p to 318p yesterday after the engineering and construction products company reported pre-tax profits little changed at £6.53 million (£6.7 million) for the half-year to December 30. Analysts had expected a small increase. The interim dividend is held at 2.45p a share, payable from earnings that fell to 10.75p a share from 12p. John McCall, chairman and chief executive, said a number of businesses suffered a weak performance that would continue to affect results in the second half.

Regent Inns placing

REGENT INNS is raising £13.6 million via a share placing as the pub operator accelerates its expansion outside Greater London. The company has exchanged contracts on 21 sites, subject to licensing and planning permission, and has another 20 sites in the hands of solicitors. New shares are being placed with institutional investors by Kleinwort Benson at 32p each. Existing shares fell 4p to 334½p yesterday. The company also announced that it has entered negotiations to sell its snooker division.

William Sinclair grows

WILLIAM SINCLAIR HOLDINGS, the supplier of products to the garden, leisure and pet markets, said it looked forward to the important spring garden season with confidence after lifting pre-tax profits to £2.24 million in the six months to December 30 from £1.76 million previously. Earnings were 6.9p a share, compared with 5.4p last time, and the interim dividend is increased to 2.1p a share from 1.9p. Shares in William Sinclair Holdings, rose 15p to 221½p, a 12-month high.

Court of Appeal

Law Report February 26 1997

Court of Appeal

Returned writ was properly served

Nottingham Building Society v Peter Bennett & Co (a Firm)

Before Lord Justice Waite and Mr Justice Singer

[Judgment February 14] Once the intended recipient of a writ, having knowledge of its nature, had been given a sufficient opportunity of possession of the writ to enable him to exercise dominion over it for any period of time, however brief, the writ had been left with him for the purpose of effecting good personal service under Order 65, rule 2 of the Rules of the Supreme Court.

Thus, where a process server put a writ into the hands of a former partner of a solicitors' firm in dissolution and the partner knew that it was a writ and read the description of the parties, good service had been effected upon him, even though the partner stated that he was not accepting service and handed it back to the process server who took it away with him to obtain further instructions.

The Court of Appeal so held, allowing an appeal by the plaintiffs, Nottingham Building Society, against the defendants, Peter Bennett & Co, against the order of Sir

Peter Webster sitting as a judge of the Queen's Bench Division on January 18, 1996.

The judge had dismissed the plaintiffs' appeal from District Judge Oliver's order of December 1, 1995, declaring that their writ had not been duly served on the defendants in accordance with Order 65, rule 2 of the Rules of the Supreme Court and Order 81, rule 3(3) and that the defect in service could not be cured or waived under Order 2, rule 1.

Order 65, rule 2 provides: "Personal service of a document is effected by leaving a copy of the document with the person to be served."

Rule 81, rule 3 provides: "(3) Where a partnership has, to the knowledge of the plaintiff, been dissolved before an action against the firm is begun, the writ... must be served on every person within the jurisdiction sought to be made liable in the action."

Miss Linden H for the plaintiffs; Mr Julian Flann for the defendants.

LORD JUSTICE WAITE said that the plaintiffs claimed damages for professional negligence against the defendants, a solicitors' partnership which had been dissolved after accrual of the cause of action. The defence of the action was undertaken by the Solicitors' Indemnity Fund who had agreed that the plaintiffs need serve only one of the defendants' former partners who was now a partner in Bennett Metcalfe, which had taken over the defendants' practice.

Two or three days before the writ was due to expire a process server instructed by the plaintiffs' solicitors attended at Bennett Metcalfe's office and met a partner who had been a former partner of the defendants.

The process server carried with him a copy of the writ, a form of acknowledgment of service, and a covering letter which indicated that service was intended to be effected.

What followed when the process server entered the partner's office was described in the partner's affidavit: "The process server said that he had come to serve a writ... he had the writ in his hand and I could see the defendants' name as Peter Bennett & Co (a Firm). I said that I was not there and then accepting service but I asked to look at the writ. He handed it to me when I noticed in the body of the writ to the defendant formerly Peter Bennett & Co (a Firm) which was clearly a mistake. I said again to him that I could not accept service and I suggested that he take the writ away and that he should contact the solicitors instructing him and ask them to telephone me. He agreed and did not suggest that he had served me. With that he left taking the writ and accompanying letter (which I had not read) and the acknowledgment of service with him."

The indemnity fund's agreement as to service waived the requirement in Order 81, rule 3(3) to serve all the defendants' former partners. Nothing else was said to waive ordinary service and as the writ had only two or three days to run the only feasible service was personal service.

The issue was whether the requirements of Order 65, rule 2 had been satisfied.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English (9th edition 1993) gave as the primary meaning of the transitive verb "to leave": "cause to or let remain; depart without taking..."

There appeared to be a difference between those two meanings of meaning. One described a mere leaving, the other an element of departure with a leaving behind.

The term "leaving" in Order 65, rule 2, was to be regarded in the former sense.

Once the intended recipient, assuming him to have knowledge of its nature, had been given a sufficient opportunity of possession of the document to enable him to exercise dominion over it for any period of time, however brief, the document had been left with him within the sense intended by the rule.

Mr Justice Singer agreed. Solicitors: Eversheds, Nottingham; Wansbroughs Willey Hargrave, Bristol.

Bainbridge v Circuit Foil UK Ltd

Before Lord Justice Hirst, Lord Justice Aldous and Lord Justice Schiemann

[Judgment February 14] A clause allowing termination "without prior notice" in the rules of a company sick pay scheme meant without advance notice. The words did not mean that the employee could terminate the scheme without informing the employees at all.

The Court of Appeal so held allowing an appeal by the plaintiff, Barry Bainbridge, against the dismissal by Judge Brown in the Circuit Foil County Court on April 30, 1996 of his claim for damages for breach of contract resulting from the refusal of the defendant, his former employer, Circuit Foil UK Ltd, to pay disability payments to which he was entitled under a sick pay scheme.

Mr Christopher Jeans for the plaintiff; Mr Michael Smith for the former employer.

LORD JUSTICE ALDOUS said the plaintiff had begun work for the defendants at the end of 1978 or the beginning of 1979. His contract stated: "You are covered by the company's sick pay schemes, details of which are set out in the accompanying document."

There were two schemes, one covering absence for less than six months, and the second, the long-term scheme, covering the period after the first six months.

The plaintiff had developed dermatitis from exposure to glue at work. He was forced to leave work in November 1985 and was unable to return. For the first six months he was paid in line with the short-term scheme, thereafter under the long-term scheme. Payments ceased when he was made redundant in March 1993.

The plaintiff claimed that the failure to pay was a breach of contract. The employers contended that the long-term scheme had ended in March 1982, when the employers ceased to pay premiums to the insurers.

The judge had not informed union representatives of the non-payment until November 1985 and the plaintiff was not informed until he was made redundant.

Under the rules of the scheme the employer reserved the right to terminate or amend it without prior notice to the members.

The judge had held that the scheme had been terminated long before he became ill and that the benefit he was in fact paid between 1985 and 1993 could not have been because of any contractual entitlement. He had interpreted the words "without prior notice" to mean that no notice of termination was required.

In his Lordship's judgment the words "without prior notice" should be read as meaning without notice in advance. The words did not suggest that notice did not have to be given to effect termination of rights under the contract of employment.

The plaintiff was covered by sick-pay schemes until he was notified to the contrary. The termination clause in the rules put him on warning that the scheme might not be permanent.

But his rights under his contract of employment continued until notice was given that his contract had been varied. The employer's obligation to provide sick benefit did not end when it ceased to pay the insurance premiums.

The judge had come to the wrong conclusion of the contract of employment and the appeal would be allowed.

Lord Justice Schiemann agreed and Lord Justice Hirst delivered a concurring judgment.

Solicitors: Rowley Ashworth, Wimbledon; Burnetts, Carlisle.

Regina v Lisle

Before Lord Justice Kennedy, Mr Justice Harrison and Mr Justice Nelson

[Judgment February 20] A distinction had to be drawn between a plea to the jurisdiction of the court under rule 36 and an objection to a particular charge under rule 37 of the Rules of Procedure (Air Force) (SI 1972 No 419) as amended, made pursuant to section 103 of the Air Force Act 1955: see *Manual of Air Force Law* (6th edition (1989) volume 1, amendment 3).

The Courts-Martial Appeal Court so held in refusing an application by Graham David Lisle for leave to appeal against his conviction in April 1996 at a general court martial held at RAF

Locking (Assistant Judge Advocate General Chapple) of indecent assault.

Mr Patrick Mason, solicitor for the applicant; Mr Simon Morgan for the prosecution.

MR JUSTICE HARRISON, giving the judgment of the court, said that before the court martial the applicant had objected to the charge of attempted rape since by section 70(4) of the 1955 Act there was a statutory bar to a defendant being charged with such an offence under that section.

It appeared that the court martial had dealt with the point under rule 36, which dealt with applications by Graham David Lisle for leave to appeal against his conviction in April 1996 at a general court martial held at RAF

not subject to air force law, or the charge had not been investigated by his commanding officer in the prescribed manner: see note to rule 36.

It was quite clear, however, to their Lordships that that was a matter which should have been dealt with under rule 37 since the objection was to the validity of the charge of attempted rape.

Rule 37(2) allowed the court where there was another charge to proceed with the trial of such a charge. In this case there was also a charge of indecent assault upon which the court was able to proceed.

Although the judge advocate was wrong to assume that the application was properly made under rule 36 there was no

prejudice to the accused as all concerned understood the basis of the application.

There was no doubt that the court's finding was justified on the evidence and it was not arguable that the conviction was unsafe. Application for leave to appeal was refused.

Solicitors: Mr Patrick Mason, Taunton; Director of Legal Services, RAF Innsworth.

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 26 1997

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■ PROFILE

Will the new men at the Barbican turn the RSC's absence in the summer months to their advantage?



■ MUSIC 1

The Houston Symphony goes for the epic sound under the baton of Christoph Eschenbach

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ MUSIC 2

... while Daniele Gatti shows his flair for Austrian repertoire with the Royal Philharmonic



■ TOMORROW

How successfully does Miller's *The Crucible* transfer to the screen? Read Geoff Brown on the new films

Barbican aims for a world service

Can the City's troubled arts centre be reinvented as London's international theatre? Richard Morrison reports

The Barbican is on the brink of a brave new era. But then, it usually is. After 20 years of turbulent operation (its birthday falls next Monday), the City of London's concrete culture palace has been through more eras than the average history book.

Its first brave new age was inaugurated in 1982, when the Queen opened it with the resounding declaration that it was "a wonder of the modern world". It certainly was. Most Londoners took years to work out how to find it, and then how to get in without forcing open a fire exit. That was also the Era of Hopeless Idealism, when the London Symphony Orchestra nearly went bust attempting to fill its new home with avant-garde programmes at wacky times of day.

Then came the Era of Stropky Thespians, which lasted for years. The resident Royal Shakespeare Company rubbed the Barbican at every turn, demanded changes to the theatre (granted), and periodically threatened to quit unless given big subsidy hikes by the Corporation of London and the Arts Council (granted). In 1995 the RSC announced that it was leaving anyway — at least for the summer, when London is full of tourists wanting to see the company.

What else? Well, who can forget the Delta Era, swiftly followed by the "Get Delta Out" Era? The brief but exhausting Barbican reign of the Irish businessman Baroness O'Connell resulted in the resignation of 50 staff members — the last being the baroness herself, forced out after the LSO literally orchestrated her downfall.

And now? Again the Barbican has new dreams. The baroness never disguised her contempt for the people she endearingly described as "arty-farty types", she also left the Barbican with the most peculiar decor seen in a public building since the late Liberace hung up his suit. But now the centre has the ultra-cultured John Tusa at the helm: a man who, even when running the BBC World Service, rarely seemed to spend a night away from theatre, opera house or concert hall. The contrast

could not be greater. And as his arts director Tusa has poached from the rival South Bank Centre one of the brighter arts planners around, Graham Sheffield.

Sheffield bristles with ideas about how to fill the Barbican's theatres during the 22 summer weeks each year that the RSC will be absent. "We could have imported a Peter Hall-type repertory theatre company, or even put in a musical. But I wanted something that did not duplicate the West End and also fitted our ethos as a subsidised arts centre.

So we decided to become London's international festival theatre."

Which means that the Barbican will host the kind of large-scale foreign work — theatrical, lyric and dance — that comes to the Edinburgh Festival and enterprising regional theatres, but not to London. Sheffield wants to strike up partnerships with the trendier foreign festivals. "Lincoln Center, Vienna, BAM in New York, Holland: that's the sort of circuit I want to plug into. They haven't had a London partner, and they will add a contemporary but also popular edge to our programming."

Amazingly enough, Sheffield says, this sudden gust of foreign competition has actually strengthened the Barbican's relationship with its truculent theatre partner, the RSC. "We are working towards a very clear deal, whereby the RSC will manage the theatres on our behalf throughout the year. We will pay them a management fee, plus a programming fee for the 30 weeks of their own shows. The contract will be very specific as to who is providing what for whom. There will be no option for the RSC to go back to the Corporation and ask for more money if things get tight, as happened in the past."

The dream of turning the Barbican into London's international theatre (beginning with a Ninagawa epic in October) is just one of the bright ideas buzzing round the windy walkways. This summer the theatre will get a £1.9 million refurbishment, which (among other things) will enhance its orchestra pit and acoustics. That will prepare for the Royal Opera's visit in September, bringing Rameau's *Platée*, Britten's *Turn of the Screw* and Handel's *Julius Caesar*. Sheffield thinks the theatre has great potential for vocal and dance work. "You show directors the space and they love it. It's never been used to its full potential. That's not the RSC's fault; they have to transfer productions designed for Stratford."

Won't this emphasis on dance, physical theatre and medium-scale opera bring the Barbican into competition with Sadler's Wells, refurbished (with £30 million of lottery money) and soon to reopen up the road? Tusa and Sheffield deflect this question by speaking grandly of a "north-east cultural corridor" as an alternative to the West End. "There are a lot of good restaurants opening up in Clerkenwell," says the ever-optimistic Sheffield. He also claims to have worked out a "protocol" with Sadler's Wells, "whereby we are not programming Merce Cunningham against Bill Forsythe, or whatever."



New brooms bring a clean sweep to the City's windy walkways: the Barbican's managing director, John Tusa (left), and the centre's arts director, Graham Sheffield

Other plans? From next year the new brooms also want to mount an annual summer fortnight of theatre for and by children. This year there will probably be a circus on the sculpture court, presumably not with elephants.

And there are plans for a great missionary campaign to tell the residents of nearby London how roughs about the Barbican. "How many people out there use us as their local cinema?" Sheffield asks. The question is rhetorical, of course. Tower Hamlets residents don't, as a rule, use the Barbican at all. "It's a huge hole in our marketing, and it would widen our social and age profiles."

Naturally, there is a large "if" in all this. The money has to be raised. The Corporation of London gave £17 million to the Barbican last year, and although the superb LSO concert seasons have given the City

cause for pride, there is less satisfaction about the shenanigans on the theatre side over the years. Tusa and Sheffield need to retain every penny of the Corporation's grant. But the Corporation has embarked on a tough spending curf, and the Barbican is not exempt. A cut of more than £1 million is currently mooted. Ominously, Michael Cassidy, the canny lawyer who headed the Corporation's policy and resources committee, quit last December with the prediction that the Corporation was "beginning to show signs of pulling in its horns."

So, rather late in the day, the Barbican has begun a serious quest for commercial sponsorship. "It is strange," Sheffield admits, "that the Barbican had never talked to its neighbours. We have all these big companies sitting on our doorstep, yet many didn't know what the Barbican had to offer. We've been inviting businessmen to dinner, and many say: 'We never knew you had a conservatory, a cinema, an art gallery...'"

Now they do. But will they help to bankroll the Barbican into its latest brave new era? Let's hope that, for once, great expectations triumph over hard times.

CONCERTS: Cross-cultural new commission in Scotland; two excursions into the realms of emotion in London

Essence of Iona

THE problem with most collaborations between composers and visual artists is that, though they might set out together, the music and the painting or the sculpture tend to develop in their own way and end up not knowing each other. But *A Meditation on Iona*, the latest of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's City of Glasgow Commissions, represents a true partnership in that the sound and the vision are mutually enhancing.

The authentic way to experience the collaboration will be to hear James MacMillan's music for strings and percussion in view of Sue Jane Taylor's sand-blasted glass panels, the latter mounted against a black background and so illuminated as to offer an eerie negative image of Iona seen across the sea. The composer and the sculptor are clearly both impressed not only by the beauty but also by the religious associations of the island, and they have both attempted to design textures which allow something of that spiritual dimension to be perceived beyond the surface.

It was a pity that the first performances of *A Meditation on Iona* — given with evident complete conviction by Joseph Swensen and the SCO in the City Hall, Glasgow, and the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh — could not have been presented in a more organised context. Strauss's *Symphony for Winds* sounded oddly trivial after the MacMillan. And Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto, even with the prodigiously talented 14-year-old Karen Gomyo as soloist, is not the kind of work to be given a whole second half of a concert to itself.

GERALD LARNER

Who dares wins

SOMETHING about their body language as they prepared for the first chord of Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto suggested that the music and the painting or the sculpture tend to develop in their own way and end up not knowing each other. But *A Meditation on Iona*, the latest of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's City of Glasgow Commissions, represents a true partnership in that the sound and the vision are mutually enhancing.

Uchida matched all this

Houston SO/
Eschenbach
Barbican

with ferociously assertive playing in the tutti, while similarly yielding to more poetic instincts where required. These came to the fore much more in the Adagio — a wonderfully rapt meditation — while the finale was dispatched with due aplomb.

Heroism might also have been the watchword of Eschenbach's reading of Bruckner's Fourth Symphony — and certainly "heroic", as often, seemed a more appropriate subtitle than the composer's "Romantic". The opening string tremolos and horn calls had the sense of spaciousness that heralded a grandly conceived interpretation. In fact, it soon became evident that Eschenbach was going to waste no time in

setting things ablaze: the very first tutti detonated a controlled explosion of brass tone. It sounded glorious, it was thrilling, but surely he had shot his bolt too early? And so it turned out. None of the climaxes that followed was able to achieve any greater level of intensity and, to make things worse, they often loomed suddenly out of the blue, denying the all-important organic nature of Bruckner's structures.

The second movement, in more subdued vein, was more successful, in that the big climax seemed a more inevitable conclusion to the argument. The rousing hunting-horn calls of the Scherzo found the orchestra in fine fettle — crisp brass complemented by sleek woodwind and well-upholstered strings — and the symphony ended in an uplifting blaze of colour.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Twin pillars of heady romance

RPO/Gatti
Barbican

IN MY book transfiguration implies some kind of spiritual experience, which is hardly a prominent element either in the illustrative detail of *Death and Transfiguration* by Richard Strauss, or in the neurotic sensuality of Schoenberg's *Transfigured Night*. These works were the pillars of a Royal Philharmonic Orchestra programme under Daniele Gatti, its recently appointed music director.

Unusually for an Italian, Gatti evidently has a penchant for Strauss, to judge from the number of Strauss works in forthcoming RPO programmes. And on the evidence of this one he is able to impart his enthusiasm to the orchestra with beneficent results. His musical depiction of a dying man's pain and fever was done with keenly pointed effect, leading to a surge of rich orchestral tone as trans-

figuration ostensibly occurs in a pompous C major. Nobody would sense any spiritual element in this, although we might admire a technique of orchestration that suggests the approach of death and its ultimate release in graphic detail, just as Schoenberg handled his ensemble of strings only, enlarged from its original form for string sextet, with a skill that embraces both passion and tenderness. Gatti held these aspects in eloquent balance, and drew a lustrous quality of string playing that I have not heard from this orchestra for some time.

In transforming into wordless music a poem (by Richard Dehmel) telling of a woman whose present lover forgives her for bearing another man's child, and thereby "transfigures" the long night of their encounter, Schoenberg's masterly control of string texture becomes a temptation to romantic indulgence which Gatti successfully avoided by urging the work forward in a natural flow, giving cogent expression and articulation to the music's sensuous content.

Between these heady excursions into romantic hysteria, Alicia de Larrocha imparted a cool clarity and coruscating brilliance to Ravel's Piano Concerto with a fleet-fingered vividness that belied her age but not her experience. The long piano solo could have taken more inflection of character, but the rest was consistently exhilarating.

CHRIS PARKER

NOEL GOODWIN

Is it Bird, or is it on another plane?

SAXOPHONIST Charles McPherson is celebrated as one of the most fluent creators of spontaneous alto improvisation since the death of his greatest inspiration, Charlie Parker. So it was fitting that he should introduce himself to a vociferous audience by emerging from among them already playing the bop staple, *Blues 'n' Boogie*.

After a blistering examination of all the Dizzy Gillespie tune's possibilities, McPherson slowed the tempo with his own *Lonely Little Chimes*, a slow-building sweet warble featured on the saxophonist's 1995 quarter album, *Come Play With Me*. Then it was

back to hurtling through more familiar changes: *I Remember* was succeeded first by a slow blues and then by two great Charlie Parker favourites, *Out of Nowhere* and *Cherokee*.

Keeping the boiler stoked for such a ferociously tireless soloist is no mean feat, but McPherson's British rhythm section — pianist Dave Newton, bassist Matt Miles and drummer Steve Brown — were clearly energised by their leader's protean inventiveness.

Charles
McPherson
Pizza Express

Last week at the same club, the three backed another American saxophone great, Teddy Edwards, and the contrast between the two Americans' approach was intriguing. Where Edwards had relied on laid-back cajoling, McPherson preferred a more hands-on approach, constantly whispering encouragement to Brown in particular, and drawing a wonderfully crisp, assertive performance from him as a result. Newton, too, was sufficiently inspired to blow apart any notion that he is primarily

a luminously delicate player with a series of muscular solos.

Overall, though, as the whoops and hollers marking the climax of his solos demonstrated, it was McPherson the audience had come to hear, and great professional that he is, he did not disappoint even the most optimistic fan. As he has done throughout his career, whether gracing Mingus's bands in the 1960s or providing Parker-like alto for Clint Eastwood's movie *Bird*, McPherson gave 100 per cent — a mature master in peak form.

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

JOSEPH ERBER

Age: 12

Musical prodigy: He has been composing since he was seven, and on Saturday will become the youngest person ever to have work performed by the LSO.



Name that tune: The LSO family concert at the Barbican will include *Song Without Words*, Joseph's duet for piano and viola, orchestrated by music animator Richard McNicol. "I have no idea how the piece will sound with so many instruments," Joseph says. "But I know I will feel quite special."

How did all this happen? Joseph attended St Bartholomew's Primary School, Sydenham, with the son of the LSO's principal viola, Edward Vanderspar. Last year, Vanderspar admired Joseph's prize-winning piano composition for a school competition and offered him £100 to write a duet.

Was he reluctant to take the commission? "No, I felt I was ready for it." It took him just over a month in the holidays to complete *Song*, using the Sibelius 7 computer program. He describes it as "sort of classical, and quite romantic". Debussy, Satie and Poulenc are influences.

Does he find composing easy? "Sometimes it's very frustrating waiting for ideas to come."

Musical parents: His father, James, is a composer. His mother, Deborah Roberts, is a professional singer. She says that Joseph's abilities are beyond her wildest dreams.

Does he write only classical music? Far from it. He has completed a jazz quintet for flute, oboe, two saxophones and bass guitar, and hopes to write choral music and a musical.

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

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مركزاً من لاصح

CHOICE 1

Russian virtuoso pianist Evgeny Kissin plays a London recital
VENUE: Tonight at the Festival Hall

CHOICE 2

Hinge and Bracket take the leads in Shaffer's *Let's Get Lost*
VENUE: Opens tonight at the Belgrave, Coventry

THE TIMES
ARTS

CHOICE 3

Adrian Noble brings *Cymbeline* to the stage at Stratford
VENUE: Opens tonight, Royal Shakespeare Theatre

POP

Contradictory but compelling, Jamiroquai turn on their abundant talent in Cambridge

LONDON

BIRDY Northern Exposure's Rob Morris joins his own Knight's case in a new production of the play. (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

ON THE BEAT Richard Baker composed the 51st annual concert of the Metropolitan Police 110th Anniversary. The Metropolitan Police Band, with the Metropolitan Police Choir, will be conducted by Gordon Pock. (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

SOUTH BANK SERENADE A new production of the play. (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

AMERICAN BUFFALO Douglas Henshall. (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

THE GENERAL FROM AMERICA James Lauriston and Corn Pedgley. (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

GUYS AND DOLLS Richard Eyre. (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

NEW RELEASES (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

GRACE OF MY HEART (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

MICHAEL (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

TODAY'S CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Maury

George, baritone (Purcell Room, 7.30pm) At 7.30pm, the Queen Elizabeth Hall is the venue for a performance of *George*, a usually powerful and radical piece of music theatre created from 20 new songs. South Bank, SE1 (0171-960 4242). Tonight, various times and venues.

ELSEWHERE CONVENTRY: Dr Evadne Hinge and Daniel Hida Brown. (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

HOUSE OF COMMONS (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

HEATHCLIFF (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

ST NICHOLAS (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

CINEMA GUIDE (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

THE PHANTOM (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

CURRENT (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

THE GOODBYE GIRL (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

ONE WORD IMPROV (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

ALDWYCH (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

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SOUTHAMPTON

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STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE (11.11.97) 10.15. Preview: tonight. 8pm. Opens March 5. 7pm.

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Jammy now, rocky later?

Jamiroquai are full of contradictions. They play 1970s jazz-funk grooves for a 1990s generation. They donate a percentage of their earnings to Greenpeace, but Jay Kay, their iconic leader, has a love affair with fast cars. Onstage, Kay's arch cockney vowels and ludicrous trademark titter make him a dead ringer for the Artful Dodger in *Oliver!*—until he begins to sing, and becomes Stevie Wonder.

Four years ago Sony signed them to an almost unprecedented eight-album deal. After the first three hugely successful instalments, it looks like an astute piece of business. The large number of teenage girls present at the Corn Exchange proved that the audience for funky, danceable disco-pop is constantly being renewed and requires its own contemporary champions. What happens next is another question, but for the moment Jamiroquai could not be riding higher.

Although the band is the size of a football team, Jamiroquai is Kay. He conducts the band with strange pointing gestures and, even during the solos, he dances impressively, ensuring that he remains the sole focus of attention. At one point he says "I'm knackered", and sits down to make way for an

POP

Jamiroquai

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instrumental. Within 30 seconds he is up and back in overdrive.

Fortunately, Jamiroquai are more than a retro dance act. There are strong echoes of 1970s disco, but there is a highly developed jazz groove, too, particularly from the three-strong horn section, while Wallis Buchanan's spooky, timeless didgeridoo adds its own unique texture. Melodically, Kay's songs are adventurous, and even the hit singles such as *Virtual Insanity* and *Cosmic Girl* combine catchy hooks with unexpected twists and turns.

At the start of a 13-date British tour this was a banging gig, but the nagging question is where Kay goes from here. *Travelling Without Moving* is the title of the current album and seems to sum up their journey so far. They get bigger and bigger without making much musical progress. There are several options. Kay might experiment with strings, or he could choose to explore a purer jazz groove. Whatever he does, at 26 he is still on his side, but the day is going to come when a fiddle pop audience wonders what else he can do. And Kay had better have a good answer.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON



The cat in the funny hat: Jay Kay, lord high everything of Jamiroquai

Zombie alive and kicking

Colin Blunstone Borderline, WI

Borderline, and the warm reception they gave him. His able quartet was led on keyboards by Don Airey, once of rock titans Rainbow, but Blunstone's task was made sterner by the lack of backing vocalists—and, no doubt, by the prospect of having to recapture those gravity-defying high notes we remember him reaching 25 years ago in *I Don't Believe in Miracles* and *Say You Don't Mind*. But his vocal agility proved to be impressively preserved.

The evening offered a review of Blunstone's entire career, right back to the days of *Seasons*, as fellow former Zombies Rod Argent and Chris White looked on. His reading of Billy Bragg's *Levi Stubbs Tears* was exemplary, and, as a hush fell, to observe him caressing Hardin's *Misty Roses* was like finding a petal pressed in a book about the old days.

PAUL SEXTON

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THEATRE 1
The unknown Tennessee: the RSC and others dust off many of the rarer Williams plays



THEATRE 2
At the Riverside Studios, a new play about a miscarriage of justice falls short on quality

THE TIMES ARTS



THEATRE 3
... while the fine work of the American writer Susan Glaspell is revived at the Orange Tree



OFFER
Special prices for the latest John Godber production: see Theatre Club for details

THEATRE: Why Southern discomfort is flavour of the month. Plus a court case re-examined, and an American playwright re-assessed

A return ticket to Tennessee

There's more to Tennessee Williams than *Streetcar*, as British audiences are about to discover. Matt Wolf reports

Tennessee Williams's reputation over the last decade or so has rested on his biggest plays — *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* — and two or three others staged on both sides of the Atlantic since the playwright's death in 1983.

But the most recent Williams revival on Broadway was something different — the infrequently performed *Summer and Smoke*. And in the next fortnight, three of Williams's more obscure plays — two of them never seen professionally in Britain, the third not for 40 years — are receiving important productions.

Tomorrow, the RSC opens in Stratford its first Williams staging, *Camino Real*, which was last directed by Peter Hall in London in 1957, with Denholm Elliott and Ronnie Barker in the cast; its Stratford director is Steven Pimlott. Then next month the Cheek By Jowl touring company makes its first-ever venture into the American repertoire with Williams's *Out Cry*, a 1973 Broadway flop; it opens in Cheltenham before arriving at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith late in April. And a few nights later previews start at Plymouth's Drum Theatre of *Tiger Tail*, based on Williams's screenplay for the 1956 film *Baby Doll*. The cast includes Paul-Henry, who in 1985 was Stanley to Sheila Gish's Blanche in *Camino Real*.

That's not all. Later this year, again at the Lyric Hammersmith,

will come the London transfer of Philip Prowse's recent Glasgow production of Williams's *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*. Rupert Everett, in cross-dressing mode, will take on the Tallulah Bankhead/Elizabeth Taylor role of the ageing siren, Mrs Golorth.

Why all this activity? In part it reflects a British interest in the author's canon that has always surpassed that shown in Williams's own country, where conservative, celebrity-laden revivals have been the norm. *Orpheus Descending*, for instance, would never have travelled to Broadway in 1959 with Vanessa Redgrave had Peter Hall not revived the play successfully the previous year in the West End. But mainly it has to do with the death, just over three years ago, of Williams's longtime friend and keeper of his estate, Maria St Just, who kept such a watchful eye on his work that its full range rarely got performed.

"Maria did keep a very tight grip on things," Tom Erhardt, the worldwide agent for the Williams estate, says of Lady St Just, who is thought to have favoured Peter Hall and Richard Eyre as Williams interpreters to the exclusion of virtually everyone else. "She wouldn't let anybody else do Tennessee for a very long time. If Maria had been alive, I'm sure she would not, for instance, have allowed Sam [Mendes] to direct *The Glass Menagerie*."

Erhardt points out that several people over time had asked to do



Tennessee Williams sitting in Sloane Square in 1959 before *Orpheus Descending* opened at the Royal Court; that play was revived nearly 30 years later by Peter Hall

Camino Real, and "Maria would not permit it. The thing is, it hadn't been seen for a long, long time, and she felt there would be a lot of critical attention focused on it: she didn't want to take a chance on an unknown quantity." (Last year, exactly such a chance was taken in Cincinnati, Ohio, with the premiere of a newly discovered Williams play, *The Notebook for Trigorin*, starring Lynn Redgrave.)

Hall disputes this assessment of St Just, arguing that "the resurgence of Tennessee is very largely due to her care and enthusiasm. It's simply that she was an opinionated lady who left quite a few people with sore heads." But Barbara Matthews, Cheek By Jowl's administrator, acknowledges a "looseness" of control over the plays: "I got the feeling we would not have had the rights to *Out Cry* earlier."

What do these plays tell us about a writer who remains as singular a voice as any in contemporary theatre? "It's astonishing how much it reveals of him in a very personal way," says Timothy Walker, the director of *Out Cry*. Walker believes the play anticipates the psychosocial tug-of-war so popular in American theatre, such as Sam Shepard's *Fool For Love*, which premiered 11 years later.

As for *Camino Real*, director Pimlott pays tribute to "an American play, with all that American heart and guts, alongside a free-wheeling nature that seems deeply European". Requiring a cast of 25, the play makes financial demands more easily met outside the US, where characters such as Byron, Marguerite Gautier and Don Quixote may count for more, as well. "People say *Camino* is flawed,

but at least half of Shakespeare is flawed," says Pimlott. "Tennessee off his form is still a million times better than most people on theirs."

Camino Real opens tomorrow at the RSC in Stratford (01799 265623); Out Cry opens on March 5 at the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham (01242 572573); Tiger Tail opens on March 10 at the Drum Theatre, Plymouth (01752 267222).

Poor showing for poor Stefan

THE case of Stefan Kizsko (his name is changed to Ivan Mitrovich in this play) is deeply shocking. A simple, slightly inadequate, home-loving son of refugees who wholeheartedly believed in the fairness and decency of the British way of life, he was falsely accused of the murder of a young girl and imprisoned for 16 years before his

name was cleared. This play by Fouad Zloof and Eva Lynn is fired by the desire to right a wrong, but Kizsko's cause is little furthered by so inept a piece of theatre.

The production by Hugh Beadesmore-Billings does little to animate the bald facts of the case. Each of the nine actors plays a range of solicitors, barristers, magistrates

Ivan: A Miscarriage of Justice
Riverside Studios

and policemen, but there is not a fully developed character among them. The case is so clearly weighted that it is intellectually frustrating and emotionally unengaging.

The most glaring omission from the play is the absence of "Ivan" himself. Since he is the most interesting character it is an offence to the drama to exclude him, and does him no favours. We hear so much about this 23-year-old prepubescent boy, whose physical maturity was stunted by a lack of the male hormone until he was prescribed testosterone injections, that he becomes more of a bogeyman in our minds, albeit one who is horribly wronged.

The one character who lives

for us is his steadfast mother Charlotte, who was with him at the time of the murder but was not believed in court. With very little money and no knowledge of the legal system, she campaigned on his behalf for 16 years until the glaring flaws in the case were unearthed. After so many years of victimisation in prisons and psychiatric hospitals, the innocent Kizsko died within a month of his release.

As Charlotte, Anne Cheveau carries the whole emotional weight of the play, though her sensitive and sensitive performance is hampered by an unsuitable script. Her naive belief in human goodness and truth led her unintentionally to prejudice Kizsko's chances of a lighter sentence. She died within five months of Kizsko's death. That injustice cannot be righted, though her story at least will be remembered.

CLARE BAYLEY

Ideals in danger

THE American playwright Susan Glaspell (1896-1948) was reintroduced to us last year when Sam Walters directed *The Verge*, a study of awkward idealism that struck me as poor stuff. Very different is the present play, again directed by Walters, where Glaspell's qualities as a dramatist and social analyst come boldly across.

Glaspell was among the earliest to use the stage to state that the American Dream was now rancid. Here she suggests two turning-points: the boom years that followed the Civil War, replacing earlier ideals with greed; and the redefinition of Americanism that came with the First World War which demoralised those who did not fit the pattern.

Inheritors
Orange Tree, Richmond

Inspired by him, Silas donates the hill for a college to be built where "ideas can flow from mind to mind like seeds". Facts and feelings have to be compressed into this first quarter of the play; and like-wise 40 years later, when Glaspell introduces the next generation of the two families, now intermarried and facing issues that test earlier principles. The new victims are Asian Indians, protesting at British brutality and about to be deported so as not to jeopardise the college's appeal for state funding.

Only Madeline, the radical grand-daughter of Silas and Felix, takes up their cause, and at last the play strides forward into personal and political motives. List Stevenson invests Madeline with the passion of youth, torn between different duties. The early material burdens the play, but the second half is a well-crafted denunciation of the true enemies of democracy.

JEREMY KINGSTON

EXCLUSIVE COMBINATION THE TIMES



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CHANGING TIMES

LONDON

Comedy Theatre

To Mar 4

● NADIM WALLACE's stage adaptation of William Wharton's strange and touching novel, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, has moved to the West End with a new star — Rob Morrow, who plays Joel Fleischman in the cult television show *Northern Exposure*. During the previews of this spectacularly staged play, Theatre Club members can buy the best available seats for £10 (normally £22.50 to £24.50). Tel: 0171-369 1731, quoting your membership number

Duchess Theatre

To Mar 1

● AFTER a successful six-year run in the West End, the final curtain is about to come down on Marc Camoletti's outrageously funny comedy, *Don't Dress for Dinner*. This is your last chance, then, to enjoy the hilarious spiral of mistaken identities and desperate cover-ups that make up a farce to rank alongside the greats. Club members can buy two top-priced seats for the price of one (normally £16 to £19.50). Tel: 0171-494 5075

STRATFORD UPON AVON

Royal Shakespeare Theatre
Feb 28, Mar 6, 10,
13, 18-19 (7.30pm)

● ALEX JENNINGS is Benedict to Siobhan Redmond's Beatrice in Shakespeare's sophisticated and

THE TIMES

THEATRE CLUB

sparkling comedy, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Members can buy best available seats for only £14 (normally £18 to £26). Tel: 01799 295623 (Mon to Sat, 9am to 8pm)

MANCHESTER

Forrest Theatre

Mar 5. Tickets normally £7.75. Tel: 0161-236 7100

CARDIFF

Sherman Theatre

Apr 16. Tickets normally £10. Tel: 01222 230451

POOLE

Arts Centre

Apr 22. Tickets normally £11. Tel: 01202 685222

WESTCLIFF ON SEA

Palace Theatre

Apr 29. Tickets normally £10.25. Tel: 01702 342564

TO JOIN the Theatre Club either send a cheque for £12.50, made payable to The Theatre Club, together with your name, address and telephone number to The Theatre Club, P.O. Box 2184, Colchester CO2 8L, or telephone 01206 225145 using your credit card. Please allow 28 days for delivery of your membership pack. For general inquiries call 0171-387 9673

هكذا من لامل

Fax: 0171 782 7586

Please write with CV

Tel: 0171 680 6806

La Crème de la Crème

Fax: 0171 782 7586

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT
£14,000 p.a. Neg
PICCADILLY

The Kennel Club is the governing body of the canine world committed to the improvement of dogs.

Applications are invited for two positions within the Shows, Trials and Awards Department.

The successful candidates will be required to assist with the compilation of agendas and reports and minute taking; process and generate correspondence; update data-bases; and deal with written and telephone enquiries.

We are looking confident, outgoing, self-motivated people who have excellent communication skills. They must be efficient, well organised and able to prioritise a varied workload. Good typing and a knowledge of WP 5.1 and Word for Windows v.6 is also necessary.

If you have a genuine interest in dogs and enjoy being a team player, please write, enclosing a CV to:

Jane Roche, Personnel Manager,
The Kennel Club,
1-5 Chancery Street,
London W1Y 8AB
Closing date:
7th March, 1997

THE KENNEL CLUB

PA TO PROCUREMENT DIRECTOR
The Amrita Corporation

The Amrita Corporation comprises five businesses:

- The JAD Organisation Limited
- The Facilities Investment Company
- The Cost Base Management Team
- Sports Facilities UK
- The Common Sense Management Company

Amrita is an acronym for Amrita is more important than ability

Excellent opportunity for an up and coming individual with experience in procurement or marketing. Computer literate with knowledge of Microsoft Office.

Please send your CV to:

Jackie Hammond
Kensington House
Great West Road
Hounslow TW5 0BU

PA TO MANAGING DIRECTOR

Must possess initiative and be conversant with modern word processing packages and be fully able to work with audio processing.

This position may be suitable for a job share working 1000-1300 and 1300-1800 or may suit a seriously dedicated individual.

Salary is commensurate with experience.

Applications in writing enclosing CV to:
15 Crawford Place, London, W1H 1WY (ref: 017/RS)

SALES WP SEC. W1

To £14,500

For dynamic friendly computer company. Must have excellent Microsoft Word 6.0 and Excel 5.0 skills, outgoing personality and an ability to multi-task.

Please fax your CV to:
Sally Norwell at
Systems International
01273 766769 or
telephone 01273 766764

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Dynamic, bright PA required to assist MD in setting up a busy management portfolio. Proficient in use of WP 5.1 and typing speeds of 60wpm.

Salary £21,000.

Apply in writing with CV, or
fax to: 0171 225 2262

Manpower, London SW9 7JL
Fax: 0171 225 2262

Enjoy temping! Want to earn money, find the right permanent job or increase your career prospects?

With Crone Corkill and AIR MILES it's easy!

Our friendly, helpful team of Consultants has lots of opportunities for secretaries with 60+ wpm typing and good windows packages. We'll give you the best hourly rates AND we're the only agency to give all our temps AIR MILES awards.

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Together we'll
get you there!



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Crone Corkill
Temporary Recruitment

PA to V.I.P.
£24,000W1

Our client requires a personal secretary to organise and co-ordinate his busy life. This is a fascinating and demanding role for someone who is totally dedicated to their work and thrives under pressure. You will be responsible for the smooth running of his office and household, complex travel arrangements, recruiting staff and international liaison. Previous experience in a Royal household or formal private residence is an advantage. Excellent secretarial skills: 100/50. Please call Elizabeth Wood on 0171-434 4512.

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

Lights, Camera, Action!
£20,000 + Bens

Dynamic training and development company has a rare opportunity for you to work as the PA/Secretary to the Managing Director in the West End. If you enjoy a varied role where your contribution is vital to their overall success then look no further. Essential skills including 80wpm A/H, 60wpm typing and exceptional organisational abilities are the key, please call Andrea Murrell on 0171 434 4512.

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

Team Player
Covent Garden
From £17,000

Are you enthusiastic, team spirited, lively and hardworking? International environmental services company urgently requires a secretary to support Corporate Development Director. You must have the ability to liaise at the highest levels, organise your bosses day and provide a first class secretarial service and occasional team support. Shorthand essential. Call Alison Scott 0171-434-4512.

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

Mini Office
Manager
£18,000-24,000 a.a.e.

We have a wonderful opportunity for a very special secretary to join an exciting firm of headhunters based in the City. This is a three pronged role with responsibility for secretarial, office management duties and the possibility of becoming involved in research. We are seeking someone with financial experience, professional attitude and strong sense of fun! Age: 22-30. Skills: shorthand/ 60wpm /Windows. Please call Claire Ashley on 0171-390 7000.

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

High Fliers!
£22-27,000
package

Prestigious Investment Boutique have a new position for a senior secretary to support their Chief Administrative Officer. This is a hands on role for someone who is able to juggle a challenging and varied workload. Excellent organisational skills and the ability to adapt to changing demands are essential as the company continues to expand and diversify. You should enjoy lots of telephone liaison, scheduling of meetings, co-ordinating and analysing information for presentation at Board level. Ideally you should be A Level educated, with W4W, Excel, 50wpm typing and some form of shorthand. Please call Nicky Guise in the City. 0171 550 7000

RECRUITMENT

MAINE-TUCKER
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSOffice Administrator -
Fluent French
£30k (neg) + amazing bens

This is a fantastic opportunity for a dynamic, confident and motivated individual to join a leading international company. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including managing the reception desk, handling incoming and outgoing correspondence, and organising travel arrangements. The role also involves liaising with clients and ensuring that all administrative tasks are completed efficiently and to a high standard. The successful candidate will receive a competitive salary of £30,000 per annum (negotiable) and a comprehensive benefits package. Please send your CV to: 18-21 Finsbury Street, London EC2A 7DF. Telephone: 0171 734 7441. Fax: 0171 734 7442.

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Bored with
routine?
£25,000

Want to organise, prioritise and supervise? 2 senior executives need a professional PA with proven secretarial skills, creativity and the ability to manage the office. Variety, a lively atmosphere and the opportunity to handle projects are all available in this international holdings company near Victoria. If you are confident on Word & PowerPoint & have 60wpm typing, call Sue Garwood now on 0171 434 4512.

Crone Corkill
Recruitment Consultants

PA SECRETARY
£20,000 TO £25,000

You will be taking charge of this young directors office providing complete secretarial, administrative and personal assistance. Skills required are typing, Word for Windows, basic speedwriting and basic PowerPoint is an advantage. To find out more call Caroline Butcher.

Tel: 0171 499 5881
Adecco Elite (Rec Cons)
16 Lansdowne Row,
Berkeley Sq., London W1X 7LN

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Team Secretaries
£16K-20K + Huge Benefits,
City and West End Positions

Are you looking to move from your first secretarial job? We have two prestigious finance houses who are looking to recruit young team secretaries. What are they offering you? Unbeatable basic salaries, huge benefits, excellent training and career prospects. If you type at 50 wpm, have Word for Windows, Excel and PowerPoint - call Continuum an immediate interview.

PA in PR
City Stockbrokers

£18,500 + superb benefits
Varied duties and a busy social life on offer with this top City firm. Working in the area dealing with Public Affairs, advertising and special events you need to have good GCSEs, 80 wpm shorthand/ 50 wpm typing and a steady CV together with a calm, unflappable manner. Call Anna now for an immediate interview.

PAN EUROPEAN
RECRUITMENT
TEL: 0171 734 848
FAX: 0171 734 8501

£25,000 + London Weighting + Benefits
Waterloo

President of blue chip company is seeking a polished, experienced Secretary to manage his diverse and complex commitments. The job will involve acting both as a Secretary and as a Personal Assistant on his business affairs and charitable work, and the organisation of his busy private life. Strong communication and excellent secretarial skills essential 80 shorthand/70 typing.

Tel: 0171 588 3055 Fax: 0171 588 3066
MITCHELL YOUNG ASSOCIATES
Executive Secretarial Recruitment

IMMEDIATE SHORTHAND BOOKINGS (90wpm)

• Director's Secretary, Insurance (Temp to Perm)

• Director's Secretary, Research (3 Months)

• Junior Team Secretary, Venture Capital (Temp to Perm)

IMMEDIATE AUDIO BOOKINGS (50wpm)

• Director's Secretary, Marketing (4 Weeks)

• Team Secretary, IT (Indefinite)

• Junior Team Secretary, Admin (Monthly)

If you have good shorthand/audio skills, have excellent working knowledge of Windows packages and are aged 18-40, Pan European should be your first port of call.

MAINE-TUCKER
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

PA - c£30k tax free + bens

Monte Carlo, Paris, NY, St Martin, CERSK
If you are a dynamic, confident and motivated individual, we have an exciting opportunity for you to join a leading international company. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including managing the reception desk, handling incoming and outgoing correspondence, and organising travel arrangements. The role also involves liaising with clients and ensuring that all administrative tasks are completed efficiently and to a high standard. The successful candidate will receive a competitive salary of c£30,000 per annum (tax free) and a comprehensive benefits package. Please send your CV to: 18-21 Finsbury Street, London EC2A 7DF. Telephone: 0171 734 7441. Fax: 0171 734 7442.

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MAINE-TUCKER
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTSThe Lap of Luxury
£19k + pens, bonus, STL

This is a fantastic opportunity for a dynamic, confident and motivated individual to join a leading international company. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day to day running of the office, including managing the reception desk, handling incoming and outgoing correspondence, and organising travel arrangements. The role also involves liaising with clients and ensuring that all administrative tasks are completed efficiently and to a high standard. The successful candidate will receive a competitive salary of £19,000 per annum (plus pens, bonus, STL) and a comprehensive benefits package. Please send your CV to: 18-21 Finsbury Street, London EC2A 7DF. Telephone: 0171 734 7441. Fax: 0171 734 7442.

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Excellent
Pay

Holiday
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Full
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Package

At Manpower, we have short and long term work for secretaries who can combine top class secretarial skills with the ability to liaise at a senior level. We can offer you work with over 90 of the 'Times Top 100' companies.

As you will be representing the UK's leading employment services company, we will expect the highest standards from you. But if you have what it takes we will provide everything you need.

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Don't delay, call for an immediate interview, especially if you have languages, shorthand and audio skills.

No one else can offer you more!

Please phone either Jude or Debbie on 0171 538 1050, 1st Floor, Ensign House, Admirals Way, London E14 9RS.

MANPOWER
There's more for you

PA TO DIRECTOR

We require a dynamic PA to run a busy and professional office based in Westminster. The successful candidate will have several years experience at senior level and have first class secretarial skills, ideally using Word 6 and PowerPoint. You will need strong organisational skills and be required to take a proactive role in the day to day running of the office. Your flexibility and willingness to get actively involved in the work of the organisation, demonstrating good communication skills coupled with discretion and confidentiality are fundamental to the job.

SECRETARY/ADMINISTRATOR
(PART TIME)

We have an opportunity for a native and capable administrator with strong organisational skills to work in our Westminster office. Your first class secretarial skills using Word 6 and Excel will maintain the high content of administrative work for which you will require first class organisational and communication skills. You will need to be self motivated and flexible with the ability to meet deadlines. In addition you will become involved with the administration of specific projects including business maintenance, facilities and tracking progress through flow charts.

To find out more about these challenging roles please ring: Anna Scott, 0171 225 2262, 18-21 Finsbury Street, London EC2A 7DF. Telephone: 0171 734 7441. Fax: 0171 734 7442.

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Personnel Officer
c. £20,000

(Maternity Cover)
Professional, City firm seek experienced Personnel Officer. Responsible for recruitment of support staff, advising on general personnel issues, maternity and sickness.

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Call PATRICIA
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Cook (Monday/Pager)

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SW1 trading co needs well spoken/presented 22-29 yr old. Strong listening and admin skills. 40% typing. Small friendly office.

Mrs Prosser
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Beauchamp Square

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Top PA with competent typing, shorthand & experience. Efficient receptionist/junior secretaries for up-market location.

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Young Administrator / Secretary required to support a broker in a leading City Bank. Superb organisation and communication skills req. Lots of client contact. Call Emily Aldrich.

Tel: 0171 588 8999

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Fabulous role - based on the trading floor. Right hand to 3 young brokers. Very high profile with masses of involvement - they need a true PA. Call Emily Aldrich.

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A 1:1 role supporting the President of this prestigious international oil company. As a flexible and ambitious PA you will enjoy project work and developing your role as you become fully involved in your boss's work. 50wpm typing. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

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You must be used to a small, prestigious environment dealing with high profile in a fast paced business. Commitment and flexible attitude a must together with excellent support skills. 55/90 skills, Word, Excel and Powerpoint. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
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+ package + overtime. This cosmopolitan company is located in plush Mayfair offices and offers an extremely generous package and appealing work environment. Powerpoint skills, a strong personality and the flexibility to work long hours essential. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

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The perfect setting for a gem of a secretary, assisting a managing director of a prestigious broking house. Normal hours, and attractive benefits including a bonus. Speeds 90/55 and a stable background would be appreciated. Please telephone 0171 628 9529.

Elizabeth Hunt
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Elizabeth Hunt
RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS

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A 1:1 role supporting the President of this prestigious international oil company. As a flexible and ambitious PA you will enjoy project work and developing your role as you become fully involved in your boss's work. 50wpm typing. Please telephone 0171 495 2321.

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EXECUTIVE PA
C£25,000+PRP
Peritemps
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Executive Partner who heads up the International Division of a prestigious Company is in need of a top flight PA with the relevant skills and experience (including shorthand) required for a position of this level. You will be involved in extensive travel arrangements due to the Partners hectic schedule and may, on occasions be required to travel with him. An approachable, amiable gentleman who will expect you to be pro-active and confident in your abilities.

Call MICHELLE SAYERS on
0171 621 1304
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25K - CITY TEMP...
25K - OPP HARRIS...
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Situations vacant will become filled in the "Career Village" at The Times Crème 97

In just two years, The Times Crème has become London's leading event for executive personal assistants and office managers. It has become evident from our research that visitors would like to see many more recruitment agencies at the event. Responding to this request, we are delighted to announce the launch of "The Career Village" at Crème 97 in June this year. The "Career Village" will be a branded feature area located on the ground floor of Olympia 2 on 11-13th June 97. A number of recruitment companies will be on hand, under one roof, to meet potential job applicants and give advice on career advancement. The special Briefing Forum, which will form part of the "Career Village", will include speakers qualified in recruitment, presenting a structured programme of highly relevant topics. For more information, please complete the coupon below and return it to: Jenny Moore, Crème 97, Francis House, Kings Head Yard, New City Court, London SE1 1NA. Telephone 0171 453 5346.

I am interested in exhibiting/visiting (please delete)

NAME _____ POSITION _____

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____ TELEPHONE _____

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Fax: 0171 782 7586
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Property Co. based in Kensington, W8 seek a conscientious, hard working, cheerful property administrator with excellent telephone manner. The successful applicant will be:
• 20-25 years old
• typing skills 60 wpm
• computer literate and use of Word 4 Windows
• Memory for small detail
• deal with day to day running of the office
• will be able to cope in a very busy and fast environment
Competitive salary according to experience: £15-£18 p/w. Please fax 0171 584 4389 or send CV to: Miss M. Ebbels, 11 Palace Gate, W8 5LS

ADMINISTRATOR
£16,000
Typical independent body seeks an Administrator to help organise programmes/events & support 3 part-time Directors in St James's. W4/W5/Excel/Access highly valued. Grad calibre with min 2 yrs exp. Call 0171 287 2444/Ext 287 3717

Office Junior
£13,000
We want a cheerful, organised and enthusiastic individual to join our team. A challenging and rewarding role with a great future. You will be responsible for the day to day running of our office facilities and provide administrative support for our sales team. You must have working knowledge of MS Word, W4/W5/Excel/Access and be a team player. Please send your CV to: Ms. Ebbels, 11 Palace Gate, W8 5LS

PROPERTY CO-ORDINATOR
£15,000
Outgoing, cheerful 35-40 + administrator to take responsibility for the day to day running of the property department. A challenging position offering a salary package to £15,000. Call David Fisher or Elva Zaitl

SALES & MARKETING PA
£18,000
Designing the brand new West London office, you will be responsible for the day to day running of the office. A challenging and rewarding role with a great future. You will be responsible for the day to day running of our office facilities and provide administrative support for our sales team. You must have working knowledge of MS Word, W4/W5/Excel/Access and be a team player. Please send your CV to: Ms. Ebbels, 11 Palace Gate, W8 5LS

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Learn MS Word, Excel and Powerpoint, Touch-typing and Document Layout in just 6 weeks
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Many more courses available
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LONDON'S PREMIER BUSINESS COLLEGE
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LEGAL LA CRÈME
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Forward your 2 years' Commercial Conveyancing experience with this superb one off role. Designed for those who love being kept busy, you'll assist two hyperactive Solicitors who work at 100 mph - a speed you'll be able to keep up! This challenging position will suit those with strong WPM skills who enjoy being really 'stretched'.
For further information call DANIELLE or REBEKAH on 0171 935 7248
111 Baker Street, London, W1M 1FE

Design Studio Administrator
£18,000
An increasingly successful design studio producing corporate and brand identity design is looking for a Design Studio Administrator. The post is a new one and the role is to ensure an efficient environment within the studio by handling all of the day to day running of the business, including client enquiries, bookings, invoicing and general office management. If you are looking for a job to make your own and have at least five years' general administrative experience, we would like to hear from you. Please send your CV to: Ms. Ebbels, 11 Palace Gate, W8 5LS

SUPER SECRETARIES
£15,000 - £18,000
We are looking for a highly motivated and enthusiastic individual to join our team. A challenging and rewarding role with a great future. You will be responsible for the day to day running of our office facilities and provide administrative support for our sales team. You must have working knowledge of MS Word, W4/W5/Excel/Access and be a team player. Please send your CV to: Ms. Ebbels, 11 Palace Gate, W8 5LS

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Outgoing, cheerful 35-40 + administrator to take responsibility for the day to day running of the property department. A challenging position offering a salary package to £15,000. Call David Fisher or Elva Zaitl

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The VAT man cometh

Dixie Nichols on a hot line that separates the payers from the non-payers in the building trade

Customs and Excise last September launched a telephone hot line to enable people to inform on builders who evade VAT payments. Now they are taking about 40 calls a week. Half their leads come from disgruntled homeowners whose cash-in-hand builders have let them down and half come from builders who have tendered for the job and have been undercut by rivals who are not playing it by the book.

When calling in the builders, most people will go to a couple of companies for a quote. One might be an established local firm and the other might be the man that a friend used to get a roof repaired. The local firm will send in a written quote which will say plus VAT. The other quote might well be verbal, "cash unless you want to pay the VAT". So the first firm is going to be under pressure to lose their VAT or not do the job. Few people can resist the temptation to save 17.5 per cent.

Peter Crow of the old, established Essex builders G.Crow and Son has seen his small works business "virtually wiped out" since the extension of VAT to alterations and extensions in 1989. The company used to employ 24 men but is now down to 13. He is competing not just with the cash-in-hand merchants but also with the small painter and decorator or jobbing builder, who need not register for VAT (and therefore does not have to charge it) as long as its annual turnover is under the current £47,000 threshold.

Mr Crow understands the customer's point of view. He says: "Why should they pay 17.5 per cent extra just for the pleasure of having Mr Crow do their decorating?"

On small jobs a registered firm competing with an unregistered firm will lose out even though its quote before VAT is considerably lower. I have personally seen documentation for one house renovation where the successful unregistered firm quoted £18,920 while the competition quoted £16,409 but still lost the job because it had to add VAT, which took the total to £19,280.53.

David Carter of Carebuild Ltd, a small Berkshire building firm em-



A painter, decorator or builder does not have to pay VAT if annual turnover is less than £47,000

• VAT is not payable on building work on new buildings and on some listed buildings

• Some builders who are not registered charge VAT and pocket the extra. You can check their status on the hot line.

• Any builder employing a full-time labourer will find it hard to keep under the yearly threshold given the cost of materials involved.

• Further information: Call the VAT construction hot line on 0500 550 400/450.

playing eight men, says the introduction of VAT has been "instrumental in destroying the goodness in the industry and has pushed decent companies to the wall." Mr Carter says he is put under pressure by customers to forget about the VAT. "We lose job after job because we have to charge VAT," he says. "The desire for avoidance

is universal. Doctors, dentists, housing associations and private householders cannot claim back the VAT, so don't want to pay." One of the ways around this is to divide work up and use unregistered contractors.

There is a massive amount of evasion going on, with many unregistered traders earning well

above the threshold. There are also colluded in VAT evasion and find themselves in trouble? The good news is that a householder's position is secure: it is not illegal to offer cash payment. The responsibility for the proper payment of VAT lies firmly with the contractor. The risk for householders is that they have no guarantees if there is no proper paperwork.

Those builders in the shadow economy who are beginning to think it might be time to join the VAT club can expect a sympathetic reception. A Customs and Excise spokesperson says: "We will look closely at all mitigating circumstances. If they come clean, then we do not want to see them go bankrupt."

So if guilty builders want to avoid being nailed to the floor, perhaps they should have a quiet word in an official ear.

haven't got the right knowledge, they don't know the first thing about construction and have no idea how it is done. They don't seek advice and they behave like a bull in a china shop. In 20 years I have never known any of the cash-in-hand brigade get caught."

The September initiative was a pilot scheme and little has been done to publicise the existence of the hot line. The 5,000-strong Building Employers Confederation, who have been pressing for action against VAT evaders for some time, have circulated whistle-blowing forms to its members and these are coming back at about five a week.

Liz Bridge, the confederation's tax expert, says: "We've demonstrated that we have not been blustering about a non-existent problem, and that Customs can earn money through its investigation." She says that the industry is able to supply leads as it tendsers for work and that it knows the costs involved.

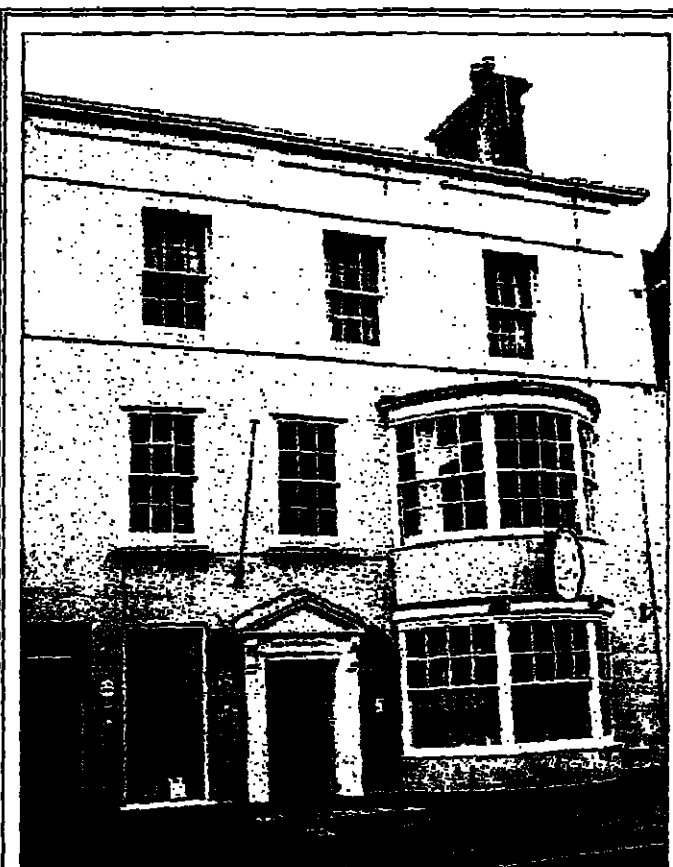
Customs and Excise's only specialist Construction Compliance team is based in North London. It has handled 300 active cases in 16 months, which have triggered 14 registrations for VAT from the shadow economy. The impact may not be massive but word will spread.

The whole governmental spend-to-save initiative is bad news for the evader, and some builders are now running scared. The sharing of information between departments means that once one department has finished with a wrongdoer, he or she is passed on to the next and the next until there is no money left. Customs and Excise periodically go through local-paper advertising and the Yellow Pages, checking advertisers against its lists of those registered for VAT.

Where do householders stand in all this? Can they be shown to have colluded in VAT evasion and find themselves in trouble? The good news is that a householder's position is secure: it is not illegal to offer cash payment. The responsibility for the proper payment of VAT lies firmly with the contractor. The risk for householders is that they have no guarantees if there is no proper paperwork.

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The Mock Turtle: Ronay-recommended, for sale at £215,000

IN THE MARKET

Fine food with all the trimmings

ONE OF Dorchester's finest restaurants is for sale. Asking price for the Egon Ronay-recommended Mock Turtle Restaurant, complete with two self-contained flats and parking space is £215,000. The restaurant, in the heart of Thomas Hardy country, is mentioned in the Michelin and Good Food guides. The county archives tell of a 1824 storm in which the chimneys of the building collapsed, killing the rector and his wife, who lived there. Details from Jackson-Stops & Staff, Dorchester, 01305 251400.

and offers in excess of £600,000 are sought for the 47-year lease. The managing agents say a charge of £140,000 would have applied to the apartment this financial year if normal service charges had been in force. Details from Savills, 145 Kensington Church Street, London, 0171-221 1751.

Holding back

THE SHORTAGE of property for sale shows no sign of easing, according to the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in its latest survey of the housing market in the three months to the end of January. Reasons for delays in selling are that owners are waiting for the summer payouts by building societies being "demutualised", and the institution says, an unwillingness to sell before they have found another property.

Free service

SOMETHING for nothing? A two-bedroom, first-floor flat on Hyde Park has no service charges, because of an ancient clause in the lease, even though the landlord is required to maintain and insure the building, provide hot water, central heating and employ a resident caretaker. The flat, which needs some updating, has two reception rooms and two bathrooms.

Northern light

A £1 MILLION glass-walled penthouse is to be built on top of one of the oldest warehouses in Leeds, Simpson's Fold, which dates back to 1520. The penthouse, with solar-powered heating, a private running track, gymnasium and staff quarters, has been designed by Gordon Carey and is being developed by the Leeds Loft Company.

New Housing Act rules will give landlords speedier powers of eviction

LANDLORDS can repossess their property faster for non-payment of rent after Friday when new rules laid down by the Housing Act, 1996, come into force.

Under the Act, courts must order possession when a tenant fails to pay rent for two months instead of three. Repossession can also be ordered for anti-social behaviour, not only if the tenant misbehaves, but also his friends.

Assured shorthold tenancies for rented flats are no longer confined to an initial six months minimum letting if both landlord and tenant agree, unless the rent is more than £25,000 a year. This provides more flexibility for landlords, who might wish to take on a short-term tenant to "fill in" between long-term tenancies, and help house-hunters who move into rented accommodation for an unknown spell after selling one

Tougher rules for tenants

property while looking for another to buy.

The new Act assumes that any new tenancy is an assured shorthold tenancy unless there is any paperwork to confirm any alternative agreement. This removes an ambiguity in the law which previously led to landlords sometimes creating sitting tenancies inadvertently.

The measures are likely to benefit small investors who take out a second mortgage to buy a flat or house to let to cash in on a rising market. Christine Leach, Associate Director at Chesterton's Residential, says: "These new measures will make a difference in terms of peace of

mind. The restriction on the period of a tenant's arrears is a key point. Previously the tenant could string it out because the landlord would take him to court at the end of three months, the court would give the tenant up to 28 days to leave, and the landlord could lose four months' rent."

The new measures were welcomed by Caroline Cope, Chairman of the Association of Residential Letting Agents, who says: "Although the 1988 Housing Act restored the principle of a free and fair market for landlord and tenant, the new Act has simplified the legal framework and will encourage more landlords to come into the market."

"We believe the new Housing Act has created a fairer balance between the rights of tenants and those of landlords. A landlord should be able to protect property which may be his own home or a significant part of his savings or investment plan."

But the decrease in the private tenants' security is not welcomed by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, which says there was no justification for reducing the time for rent arrears from three months to two. "This is of even greater concern given changes to housing benefit regulations which will provide for housing benefit to be paid in arrears," said a spokeswoman. "CAB already too often report clients facing rent arrears and threatened with possession because of delays in payment of their housing benefit."

CHRISTINE WEBB

Bargains at home and abroad

There are some newcomers and a surprising number of veterans in the third of The Times's regular series on bargain houses which have been for sale for many months.

Flax, near Maulds Meaburn, Cumbria, has been for sale for four years. In our last column, Charles Yeoman of Strutt & Parker said he would not reduce the £750,000 asking price because the buyer would be one applicant in a million. Almost four months later, the Grade II Palladian villa has yet to find that buyer.

Mr Yeoman says: "More people are now showing an interest, and suitable buyers are now coming out of the woodwork."

Just entering its fourth year on the market, Netherby Hall, near Carlisle, is a veteran of our first column. On the market since late 1993, it was relaunched last June for £850,000. The fifteenth-century hall, which appears in Sir Walter Scott's *Marmion*, is now under offer.

Meadow Bank House near the Solway Firth is now under offer, after over three years on the market. The Georgian neo-classical mansion, with a ten-acre park, was reduced from £230,000 to £200,000.

In Caithness, fifteenth-century Dunbeath Castle has been on the market for over a year. Its most recent owner is thought to be the mysterious American millionaire, Stanton Avery.

Still a modest £3 million, the castle has 30,000 acres with a 9,000-acre deer forest. Fiddleback Farm near Carlisle came onto the market last November. Already reduced from £210,000 to £187,000, the



Dunbeath Castle: offered at £3 million

Buyers with a keen sense of value are now coming forward

nine-acre farm dating back to 1709 is a bargain, says Peter Hayward of Peter Hayward Associates "for anyone seeking land or a commercial opportunity". There are still bargains in the capital. A two-bedroom flat at 29, Sloane Gardens,

SW1, has been reduced from £650,000 to £635,000, with a 47-year lease. Agents Douglas & Gordon report that the flat is now under offer.

Also in SW1 is 38, Chapel Street, a five-bedroom family house, which has been on the market for over a year. With only 35 years left on the lease, the house has been reduced by over £200,000, from £800,000 to £595,000.

Witham House in Langrick, Lincolnshire, has been reduced from £310,000 to £275,000 since it went onto the market last June, with an indoor swimming pool thrown in. The five-bedroom country house has five acres, outbuildings and greenhouses.

Further afield, Châlet Brames near Meribel, in France, has been on the market for almost two years and its price reduced from about £2.5 million to about £1.8 million.

One long-unsold property, Les Louves near St Tropez, did finally move last week. It was reduced last year from Fr9 million (about £1 million) to Fr6.5 million. The current strength of the pound may have helped prompt the sale.

AMANDA LOOSE

Flax: Strutt & Parker 01423 561274; Netherby Hall: Jackson-Stops & Staff 0171 589 4536; Meadow Bank House: Savills 0151-226 6961; Dunbeath Castle: Knight Frank 0131-225 8171; Fiddleback Farm: Peter Hayward Associates 01228 810300; Flat 4, 29 Sloane Gardens: Douglas & Gordon 0171-225 1225; 38 Chapel Street: Beamey Pearce 0171-589 1333; Witham House: Strutt & Parker 01833 43123; Châlet Brames: Knight Frank 0171-629 8171

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FOOTBALL

Juninho leaves problem for Middlesbrough

By DAVID MADDOCK AND RICHARD HOBSON

AS Stockport County prepared yesterday for the first leg of their Coca-Cola Cup semi-final against Middlesbrough, their Edgley Park pitch lay in pieces, with the groundsmen struggling to lay new turf over large areas of previously waterlogged earth.

Nevertheless, the pitch will be ready in time for the game tonight — Stockport have offered assurances that, even if it rains, the match will go ahead after it was postponed because of a deluge a week ago — and it is Middlesbrough, of the FA Carling Premiership, who find themselves worrying about somehow putting patchwork pieces together. In their case, however, absenteeism is the problem.

Four defenders — Derek Whyte, Phil Whelan, Steve Vickers and Nigel Pearson — are all doubtful with injuries, while, worse still, Juninho, the Brazil midfielder player, has

opted for international duty rather than the attractions of betting a howling gale and a pumped-up Nationwide League second division side on a wet Wednesday night. Juninho will play half a game for his country against Poland in Rio de Janeiro and even the prospect of a big semi-final could not persuade him to stay in England.

"I was becoming the forgotten man for my country," he said. "I was overlooked so many times that it was becoming very concerning. I am happy at Middlesbrough, but playing for my country means so much to me, far more than anything else in football. The Brazil coach is already thinking about his squad for the World Cup and I want to make sure I am in those thoughts."

Stockport, predictably enough for underdogs, do not have similar international problems, but they do have

several injury doubts before what is the biggest game in their history. Mike Flynn, the captain, Alun Armstrong and Sean Connolly are all facing late fitness tests.

Martin O'Neill will stay true to his word tonight when he sends out his "first team" for Leicester City's FA Cup fifth-round replay against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge. The Leicester manager did nothing yesterday during his routine, pre-match press conference to quell the acrimony that followed the 2-2 draw in the original tie at Filbert Street, when his side recovered from 2-0 down despite missing four leading players — Neil Lennon, Murray East, Matt Elliott and Emile Heskey — through suspension. All four are available tonight.

"Rund Gullit [the Chelsea player-manager] mentioned after the first game that he thought we had been lucky," O'Neill said. "I couldn't recall them peppering our goal, but I retorted that if that was what he thought, then I would send our first team for the replay and try to give them a better game."



Point duty: Ogrizovic, veteran of Coventry City's 1987 FA Cup Final win, directs traffic around his goal. Photograph: Marc Aspland

Ogrizovic still a force for boys in sky blue

Richard Hobson meets a goalkeeper with ambitions to earn a return visit to the scene of the finest hour of his career

They used to take a simple view of crime prevention in the Nottinghamshire Constabulary. The biggest men had the highest-profile postings in the areas where trouble was expected. Few arms of the law were longer than those of PC Steve Ogrizovic.

Twenty years on, Ogrizovic finds himself repelling strikers rather than Saturday-night drunks in Nottingham city centre. He does so with no less vigour and a clear-up rate that would be the envy of most modern police forces.

If Coventry City win the FA Cup this season, then Ogrizovic's penalty save against Blackburn Rovers in the fourth round will be highlighted as one of the crucial moments in their passage to success. Coventry won the tie 2-1 and then beat Derby County at the Baseball Ground tonight, with a home quarter-final against Middlesbrough waiting.

This is the most open

competition in years and Coventry supporters are inevitably thinking back to 1987, when their side beat Tottenham Hotspur 3-2 after extra time at Wembley.

Ogrizovic and Brian Borrows are the only survivors from that team still with the club and, while Ogrizovic is reluctant to reflect on the biggest day of his career, progress this season dictates that people are demanding he trawls his memory.

"The last thing people want to be reminded of at the moment is what happened ten years ago," Ogrizovic said. "It was a big thing at the time because we had never won it before but at the moment a repeat is still just a dream."

"The Premier League sides still in the draw will think that this is the best chance

they will have for many years because of the teams who have been knocked out. All of the sides will be fired up that little bit more and, whoever wins, I think there will be some great matches."

When pressed on the matter, Ogrizovic pointed to three areas where Coventry scored highly in 1987. He believes the management team of John Sillett and George Curtis instilled the best team spirit he has known, that the side was perfectly balanced and that the majority of players were too often underestimated.

If there were "no stars" then, the side is packed with expensive signings now. Indeed, individually, Ogrizovic believes the squad must be the strongest in the history of the club. Against that, a league position of fifth from

bottom suggests that something remains awry.

Coventry have waited until the final day of the season to stave off relegation four times since Ogrizovic arrived from Shrewsbury Town in 1984, and he acknowledged that the present campaign is following a familiar pattern.

"At the end of the season, when you have won to stay up, it is a huge buzz. Then you cast your mind back to the weeks and months of worry and say 'never again'. Then in August, for some reason, we slip into the same bad habits."

Ogrizovic deserves a quieter life in the winter of his career. He is 40 in September and, over Christmas, he eclipsed the club record of 542 appearances held by Curtis, a remarkable feat considering that he spent 4½ years as

Southampton likely to be stalked by Fear

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

WIMBLEDON, whose tigerish qualities have been in evidence throughout a remarkably successful season, are likely to have Fear in their heart when they run out at The Dell tonight for an FA Carling Premiership match against Southampton.

There will be no mellowing of their traditional tenacity, simply a replacement of the injured Vinnie Jones's combative midfield talents with those of Peter Fear. The 23-year-old Londoner, who came on as a substitute for Oyvind Leonhardsen — another absentee tonight — in the victory over Arsenal on Sunday, is likely to make only his seventh start of the season.

"He belies his name," Joe Kinnear, the Wimbledon manager, said. "He has no fear. And he's another example of the squad we are building. It has got to the

stage now when I can bring people into the side and drop others out but still have confidence that everybody will do their job."

Wimbledon are 12 points behind Manchester United, the leaders, in the Premiership but have three games in hand. They are also in the semi-finals of the Coca-Cola Cup and last eight of the FA Cup.

Kinnear said: "We've got to focus on the league and forget the cups for a while. Europe next season is still our main aim and it would be marvelous to achieve it by finishing high in the table."

Southampton, whose relegation plight became even more serious after they lost a two-goal lead against Sheffield Wednesday on Saturday and slipped to a 2-2 defeat, could recall Matthew Oakley and Robbie Slater in midfield.

Ferguson rules out Suker move

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

DAVOR SUKER, the Croatia international, travelled back to Spain last night after talks with Arsenal but without making contact with Manchester United. Suker will leave Real Madrid at the end of the season and he has indicated that he will definitely be coming to England.

The champions, though, appear out of the running after Alex Ferguson, the United manager, ruled out a possible move. Chelsea could rival Arsenal for his signature.

Peter Schmeichel, desperate to clear his name after allegations that he had had an affair with Ian Wright, the United striker, who was barred in Manchester United's match at Highbury last week, was sparked by a racial insult aimed at Wright when United entertained Arsenal at Old Trafford in November, is threatening to go to court.

The claims are still being investigated by the police, but Maurice Watkins, the Manchester United director and solicitor, said: "Reports that Peter is taking legal advice are true, but other than to confirm that I don't want to make any further comment."

John Ebbrell, the Everton midfielder player, is poised to be reunited with Howard Kendall, his former manager at Goodison Park. Kendall, now in charge at Sheffield United, has made a bid of £1 million for the former England B and Under-21 international. Jonathan O'Connor, the England Under-21 player, has committed his future to Everton by signing a three-year contract.

Kyle Lightbourne, the Walsall forward, rejected the offer of a long-term contract with the Nationwide League second division side yesterday, opening the way for a new bid from Coventry City.

The Bermuda international, who has been in the FA Carling Premiership, Walsall have already turned down an offer of £400,000 from Coventry.

Mick Jones will be offered the post of Plymouth Argyle manager later this week. Jones has been caretaker-manager since Neil Warnock was sacked three weeks ago.

Pearce pledges to keep tight control on spending targets

By RICHARD HOBSON

THE new owners of Nottingham Forest confirmed yesterday that Stuart Pearce will remain as player-manager of the club for the rest of the season. The announcement came after a 90-minute meeting between Pearce and Irving Scholar, the former Tottenham Hotspur chairman who has become a football consultant at the City Ground after taking a leading role in Bridgford plc, whose takeover bid was accepted by shareholders on Monday.

With £16 million of Bridgford's money injected into the club, Pearce told Scholar about the players he would like to sign before the transfer deadline next month.

However, while indicating that his priority is to buy a top-class striker, Pearce said that he would not be held to ransom because of the huge funds at his disposal.

"There are players I would like to sign but we have a valuation on them and we are

not going to pay silly money," Pearce said. "We need to score goals but I think that any manager of a side near the bottom of the table would say the same thing."

Possible targets include Pierre van Hooijdonk, who is untried at Celtic, and Dean Holdsworth, who has lost his first-team place at Wimbledon.

Pearce will reconsider his own position at the end of the season. If he remains in charge, the club is likely to appoint a managing director to absorb some of the workload. "I am the first to say I don't want to stay in the office nine-to-five and I won't change that view," he said.

"But, I'll say it again: whatever is going to be for the benefit of this club, I am happy to go along with it."

"The short-term aim is to stay in the Premiership. Mr Scholar is happy for me to carry on and take the club forward. In the summer we can take stock and build a more solid platform."



Pearce priorities

England must stay at home

By JOHN GOODBODY

FIFA, the world governing body of football, yesterday ruled out proposals by the British Government to use the lavish new stadiums in Scotland and Wales in England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup.

The Football Association has been hesitating over whether its candidature would be boosted by staging games at the 75,000-seat Cardiff Arms Park and grounds in Glasgow, Edinburgh and possibly Belfast. England already has ample facilities that it used for the European championship.

However, Keith Cooper, the Fifa spokesman, said yesterday: "Our rules state that bids come from one national association and by implication all the venues for the tournament would come from that country. To use facilities in another country would not conform to the regulations."

However, the Football As-

sociation has been loath to include venues outside England for two reasons. First, it would give the impression that England, by itself, would not be able to stage the 32-nation tournament.

The grounds used so successfully for Euro '96, which made UEFA, the European governing body, a record profit of more than £60 million would again form the nucleus of facilities, but Wembley is also being completely rebuilt to make it the most modern venue in Europe.

Second, the football associations of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are concerned for political reasons not to blur the historic separate identities in football of the four countries.

Any move towards using facilities in each other's countries might be seen as being the first step towards a unity that none desires.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

As declarer I had all the clues on this hand, from the match between King (the eventual winner) and Armstrong in the trials for the 1996-97 English team. I came to the wrong conclusion.

Dealer West	Game all	IMP's
<p>♠AQ2 ♥J7542 ♦10 ♣J1092</p> <p>♠109 ♥K3 ♦Q9863 ♣AQ64</p>	<p>♠K ♥10986 ♦AKJ7 ♣8753</p> <p>♠J876543 ♥AQ ♦542 ♣K</p>	
<p>1 NT (11-14) 3 D Pass</p>	<p>Pass Pass 5 C</p>	<p>2 NT Pass 3 S All Pass</p>

Contract: Four Spades doubled, by South. Lead: six of diamonds

East's 2 NT asked West to bid his better minor. Bizarre to use this deservedly little-known convention on a hand only 4-4 in the minors.

East won the first diamond with the king. What does this tell declarer about the layout of the diamond honours? It is quite revealing. As West would not underlead the ace of diamonds, East is marked with the ace. If East held A K Q, he would win with the queen. And if West held Q J x, he would lead the queen. So, if the defenders are not false carding, West has the queen of diamonds and East the ace, king and jack.

At trick two East switched to the seven of clubs. West took the king of clubs with the ace and continued diamonds. I ruffed in dummy and played the jack of clubs, throwing my third diamond — a loser-on-loser play. That way I could

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Jersey International

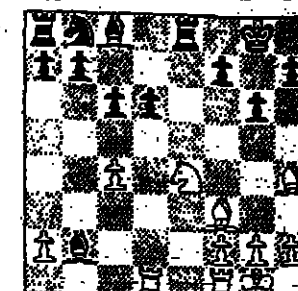
Andrew Webster scored a huge success in the Deloitte & Touche Jersey International when he captured sole first prize ahead of three grandmasters, including the reigning British champion. Scores at the top were: Webster 6; Hodgson and Bogdan Lalic 5½; Simons, Smallbone and reigning British champion Chris Ward 5. Britain's top woman player, Susan Lalic, was among those on 4½.

The following game demonstrates Webster's clear blend of strategic preparation and tactical aggression. After a slow opening, White engineers a sudden and dramatic breakthrough on the f7 square.

White: Webster
Black: Okostene
Jersey, February 1997

English Opening	Diagram of final position
<p>1 O4 c6 2 N3 N6 3 G3 G5 4 B3 B5 5 Bx3 G6 6 G3 G5 7 Nxd2 O-O 8 Gg2 Re8 9 Bg2 Nbd7 10 Nf4 Bg4 11 Bf3 Bxf3 12 Nf3 Nc5 13 Qc2 Nf6 14 O-O Bf5 15 a3 Re8 16 B4 dxc4 17 Nxd4 b5 18 Nxd5 c5 19 Ng5 cxb4 20 Qb3 a5 21 Bxb4 Nc5 22 Ng7 Qb6 23 e4 Nxb4 24 e5 Rc2 25 Rf6 Rf2</p>	<p>26 Rb6 Rb3 27 Rxb6 R8 28 R8 R7 29 R7 K7 30 G7</p>

White to play. This position is from the game Soba — Watson, Watson, Farley and Williams, London 1989. White has sacrificed two pawns to gain a lead in development. How did he now recoup on his investment with interest?



Solutions on page 46

ATHLETICS

Olympics to redefine the worth of gold

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

INCREASED lobbying for the Olympic Games to introduce prize-money is inevitable after the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) yesterday raised the financial stakes for competitors at its world championships.

Having announced last year that prize-money would be paid for the first time at the 1997 indoor and outdoor world championships, the IAAF has added world record incentive payments double those offered by Weltklasse Zurich, the wealthiest grand prix meeting.

For a world record at the outdoor championships in Athens this summer, athletes will be paid \$100,000 (about £60,000), on top of \$60,000 for winning. At the indoor championships in Paris next month, there is a \$50,000 world record bonus and \$50,000 for winning. The World Cup will pay \$100,000 for a world record and \$50,000 for a victory.

Should more than one athlete in the same event break a record, only the best performance will be eligible. Relay teams setting a record will share a sum equal to that paid for an individual record. Where an event is included for the first time, such as the women's pole vault in Paris, prizes will be reduced by 50 per cent and by 25 per cent on the second occasion.

One immediate beneficiary is likely to be Wilson Kipketer, the Kenyan-born Dane, whose form outdoors last year over 800 metres suggests that he should break Paul Ereng's indoor mark in Paris. Losers may include the grand-prix promoters, as athletes save their records for the world championships and World Cup, a reversal of the 1995 world championships, when Moses Kiptanui eased down towards the end of his steep-chase victory to improve his chances of a world record bonus in Zurich five days later.

Athletes have been moving with quickening pace from the

poor working classes of professional sport towards upper middle class and, in some cases, the exceptionally rich. Michael Johnson, having signed a \$12 million endorsement deal with Nike after his Olympic 200/400 metres double, is hardly likely to dwell on the thought that, had the IAAF prize structure applied in Atlanta, he would have earned \$220,000.

That is not to say that the Olympics can necessarily continue to ignore paying the performers who help to build its cash mountain. "Traditionally, the sport works on two levels for the athlete," Mike Whittingham, a prominent British agent, said. "One is the recognition of an Olympic medal being greater than any other medal, but, following on from that, one's commercial value is usually based around the Olympics."

"That balance could change because, if the sports manufacturers come out and say next year that the days are gone where we are going to offer substantial packages, and those packages were based on performances at the Olympics, why do [competitors] the Olympics Games?"

Whittingham's concern that sportsman companies may reduce endorsement contracts to athletes is based on a move within the IAAF to halve the permitted size of logo that an athlete may display on his or her vest.

The power politics at work seem to be raising the endorsement value of the bib to the IAAF by reducing the logos on the vest, a prime television site. "If that happens, sports manufacturers are likely to penalise athletes in their individual endorsements," Whittingham said.

"The IAAF has been extremely innovative by introducing prize-money for positions and now prize-money for records. Surely there is room to define territory on the vest for everybody?"



Men against machine at the England practice yesterday as the front row prepare for a big push against France

South Africa overlook Mallett

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

WHATEVER preconceptions the management of the British Isles tour party to South Africa this summer may have had could prove invalid after the appointment yesterday of Carel du Plessis as coach of the Springboks. The former Western Province wing, who succeeded the disgraced André Markgraaff, has no formal coaching qualifications and is seen by some pundits as a political appointment.

Du Plessis, 36, no relation to the former national manager, Morné du Plessis, made 12 international appearances during South Africa's wilderness years before retiring in 1989 to concentrate on his business interests in Cape Town. He returned to the rugby arena only last year as tactical adviser to Markgraaff during the tour of Argentina, France and Wales.

When Markgraaff was forced to resign last week after the publication of racist comments he made in a telephone conversation, it was widely expected that Nic Mallett

would succeed him. But Du Plessis is perceived to have a good image with no political baggage at a time when the South African Rugby Football Union is under fire on various fronts; he will be allowed to name his own support team that may yet include Mallett and the former Natal full back, Hugh Reece-Edwards. Markgraaff enjoyed a successful tour after the failure that followed his rebuff to Francois Pienaar, the World Cup-winning captain, but Du Plessis is known to have disagreed with some of his tactical decisions and may seek a playing style more closely related to that which won the World Cup in 1995. Whether that would include a place for Pienaar in the team to play the Lions remains less certain, particularly now that Pienaar will be out for a month after damaging a hamstring playing for Saracens on Sunday.

France, who won the student World Cup in South Africa last year, play England in a student international at Cambridge on Friday, their first meeting since the mass

brawl that disfigured their pool game in Johannesburg last July. Kern Yates, the Leeds Banker, will lead an England XV showing two survivors from that game, which England lost 36-9, in Matt Jones and Jonathan Ions.

The withdrawal of Ireland and Scotland from this level has led to an abbreviated season for England, whose other games will be against the Welsh Students at Pontypridd on March 14 and opponents from either Spain or Portugal. Nevertheless, the student management is optimistic that, even allowing for the restrictions created by under-21 internationals taking place at the same time, it can continue to field teams of high quality. It points to the equivalent match four years ago, when England included Tim Strydom and Andy Gomersall, who will both be in the senior side at Twickenham on Saturday.

Murray Driver, a New Zealander who can prop on both sides of the scrum, has joined Sale, who are determined to be numbered among England's top four clubs. Driver, 24, has played for Wakefield, the province with which John Mitchell was associated before becoming Sale's influential player-coach.

ENGLAND STUDENTS: J. Fabian (Exeter), H. Collins (Sheffield), J. P. Richards (Stratford), M. Telford (Northampton), M. Denney (Bristol), N. Newman (Exeter), M. Jones (Leeds), R. Tait (Leeds), M. Long (Northampton), J. Dixon (Exeter), R. Farnes (Northampton), R. Sarsfield (Cambridge), D. Zellerbach (Bristol), M. Miles (Sheffield), K. Yates (Bristol), R. Beattie (Northampton), R. Beattie (Northampton), D. Jones (Stratford), N. Huddley (Leeds), A. Reuben (Bristol), C. Webb (Leeds), J. Jones (Leeds), College of Law

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Sport sacrificed in name of entertainment

You can say what you like about one-day cricket, but it's just not cricket, is it? And it's not really sport, either, come to that. The latest collection of absurdities is more than merely absurd; it is a matter that reveals nothing less than the lie in the soul of modern sport. But let us check out the absurdities first.

One-day cricket is a game that must, like an alcoholic, take life one day at a time. A game forced by the weather into a second day becomes a sad travesty of itself, *sans* crowd, *sans* atmosphere, *sans* everything. All that is left is the contest and that is simply not enough, not in that form of the game.

One-day cricket depends almost entirely on its sense of occasion. It is not so much a contest as a festival, a Roman holiday, a — to use the Indian term — *tamasha*. So it must be completed on the day. And so you need a contingency plan for when the rain comes.

The match last weekend between England and New Zealand needed the contingency plan. The only thing more asinine than the match and the regulations was the decision of the New Zealand captain, Lee Germon, to bat first. Once the predicted rain had duly fallen, England were required to make far fewer runs than their opponents, but with the same amount of wickets and the same number of overs of fielding restrictions. Naturally, they knocked them off in jig-time.

It was no contest, but contest was not the priority. The priority was *tamasha*. I have already had my fun with the gimmick of the batsman's personal theme tunes. This is a bit of harmless fun — like the match and like the sport of one-day cricket. Fun, rather than contest, is the priority.

There is a further absurdity in the spectacle of an umpire who has taken to dancing about when he gives signals. He has been the subject of

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

television profiles because of this charming habit. It is, I think, utterly in keeping with the dignity of the occasion. *Tamasha* cricket needs a *tamasha* umpire.

One-day cricket is seen as very much a captain's game, but it is not. Never has a sport been so surrounded with re-

strictions. A captain cannot place his fielders nor bowl his bowlers as he would like.

A bowler cannot bowl how he likes, either. He must bowl in the batsman's hitting zone; nothing to the leg and no bouncers. His job is largely reduced to putting the ball in play. In a pinch, you put the silver ball into play with the spring plunger and then it is all down to the batters and the fielders. It is the same for the bowler in one-day cricket.

You do not need to be C.B. Fry to work out that, in every aspect of the game, the festival side of things has been emphasised at the expense of competition. In the 1960s, cricket audiences were dwindling and there was a cry across the land that cricket was a sport that needed to be more entertaining.

So we have one-day cricket, which is entertaining all right, but not entirely a sport — and once sport consciously tries to be entertaining, it sets off on the short but dangerous road

that leads to the Worldwide Wrestling Federation.

One-day cricket is entertainment. So is professional wrestling. Professional wrestling goes for things like outrageous costumes, audience participation, loud and violent music, scene-stealing officials. So does one-day cricket.

Professional wrestling is not so much about the result as the spectacle, the crash-bang-wallop of it all. Need I say it? One-day cricket is the same. One-day cricket and professional wrestling are both entertainment packages: the issue of who wins and who loses is very much a secondary affair.

Obviously, one-day cricket is presented as a competition, but then so is professional wrestling. This illusion is as necessary a part of sport as *tamasha*. And certainly the players try hard enough to win rather than to lose — within the parameters of a game that has been regulated into absurdity for the sake of *tamasha*. Certainly, all the players are

aware of the truth of it all — that they are professional entertainers in a package in which the priority is public entertainment. What, you may ask, is wrong with that? Absolutely nothing. But the subtle shift in priorities, from contest to entertainment, does change absolutely everything.

Now sport is entertaining, as we all know, or we wouldn't be here. Monday night brought us a footballing version of King Lear on the heath, with the seven-goal, gale-blown West Ham United v Tottenham Hotspur match. The England v France rugby union international on Saturday is a mouth-watering prospect for the spectator.

Yet in both these examples, the players' priority was of will be to play to win. A sport that seeks only to entertain can seldom offer any higher joy. Here is a fundamental law of professional sport: sport is only incidentally entertaining. And that is why it can so often be a good deal more.

Alan Lee on the opposites attracting speculation in New Zealand cricket

Rivals resigned to playing for keeps

This is the tale of a man known to few and a man few, apparently, wish to know. It is the saga of an anonymous cricketer who found himself elevated to national captain, the glamorous young rebel whose job was undermined and the divisions that seem inevitable now that there is no longer room for both within a team whose suffering is responsible for the sharp rise in England's spirits.

The cricket world scratched its head when Lee Germon was put in charge of New Zealand late in 1995. He was uncapped and had made one largely undistinguished tour. Globally, he was a nobody, and the mystery was all the deeper because New Zealand already possessed a talented wicketkeeper-batsman in Adam Parore.

Somehow they have survived as team-mates up to now, though Parore has been unexceptional as a specialist batsman and Germon has not convinced everyone in or around his team that he is worth his place on any basis. Parore is now clinging on only through the fitness problems of others, while Germon's position is being questioned more pointedly with each new defeat.

It seems plain to all but the New Zealand selectors that they are wasting a place by accommodating them both. Germon and Parore are doubtless aware of this view, but if their relationship lacks warmth it will not be entirely

because of the consequent, unsettling rivalry. There is a chasm between their characters, one unlikely ever to be bridged.

Germon, a married man expecting his first child, owed his promotion to an image as a good guy, the type that New Zealand cricket was urgently seeking after the embarrassment of having to suspend three players for drug offences and, in rapid succession, discharging Geoff Howarth as coach and Ken Rutherford as captain. Glenn Turner was installed as coach with a brief to clean up the act and he identified Germon as his ideal accomplice.

'There is a chasm between their characters, one unlikely ever to be bridged'

Parore has been called many things in his time, but "good guy" would not feature prominently among them. His dressing-room nickname is "Mav", short for maverick, and he is widely considered to be cocksure and egotistical. He has looks, youth and charisma going for him and he has not discouraged the attentions of women's magazines, which are inclined to seek his picture whenever they feature the nation's most eligible men.

Ironically, the one blemish on Germon's references within cricket indirectly concerns Parore, who was ruled out of a

Test match in 1993 when Chris Cairns hit him on the head at net practice. Germon was so confident of being named as replacement that, at least mentally, he had his bags packed.

The subsequent announcement that the selectors had recalled Tony Blair after a five-year absence aggravated him hugely and, in a move that appeared to suggest that he felt he had no future in Test cricket, he issued a statement condemning the selectors.

Germon was shown ultimate forgiveness two years later and his demanding style of captaincy has achieved respect, though possibly not affection or admiration. A limited cricketer, he is one of that rare breed that seems born to do little but lead, and while this can be happily accepted so long as results are good, it becomes a trial of tolerance at times like

this. The tolerance of Parore has worn thin in various quarters. Earlier this winter he was told by his province, Auckland, that, temporarily, they no longer required his services. The reasons were never fully explained but they certainly included a cavalier, even arrogant attitude to team practices and gatherings. No other province seems keen to take a risk on a player with a reputation for being difficult, even unpopular, within a team environment. If he was not part of the New Zealand squad, Parore would have nobody to play for, a bizarrely friendly plight for a leading international player.

If Parore has achieved spectacular alienation, however, no one disputes that he has talent and most in this country believe him to be a far better batsman — and arguably a better wicketkeeper — than Germon. He also plays his cricket with undoubted spirit, even if this too often becomes an overly noisy and offensive aggression.

Germon speaks much of instilling aggression in his side but, somehow, one wonders if the heart of this essentially decent man is quite in it. On Sunday, after a second one-day international defeat, he was a sad, somewhat emotional figure, and if it was not the mood of one who fears imminent demotion, it was a very good impression.

There may be no significance in the selectors retaining their one-day squad only for the third match, at Napier today, but the probability is that their loyalty to Germon would not withstand further heavy losses. Come Friday week, when New Zealand play a Test match against Sri Lanka, there could conceivably be a new captain in charge, giving Parore back the dual role that he never wanted to relinquish.



Germon, above, is on a sticky wicket because of New Zealand's poor results. The selectors could now turn to Parore, the charismatic maverick, to replace him



WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 44

SHAWNEE

(c) Of or pertaining to a tribe of Algonquian Indians, formerly resident in the eastern US and now in Oklahoma. Designating a member of this tribe or its language. From the Munsee for "people of the south".

TORRIDONIAN

(b) Of, pertaining to, or designating the later of the two main series of Pre-Cambrian rocks in NW Scotland, which occur in a narrow belt running from Cape Wrath to Skye, and consist chiefly of sandstones, gneiss, and shales. Also the time of their deposition. A toponym from Loch Torridon.

WOOSTER

(a) To behave in a manner appropriate to Bertie Wooster, an amiable, vacuous young man about town in the novels of P. G. Wodehouse. An expression, "We Woostered away for a while, giggling slightly..." While we idly banded these Woosterisms, he slid a scribbling-pad across his desk.

SUNYATA

(a) The concept of the essential emptiness of all things and of ultimate reality as a void beyond worldly phenomena. From the Sanskrit word for emptiness, derived from *sunyā* empty, void.

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1 Nxd6 Rb2 Be7 and White wins the exchange (rook for bishop) and will win easily.

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If not unbelievable, then truly unspeakable

This was a true story, we were told at the beginning of *No Child of Mine* (ITV). It had to be, because it was a rotten-made-up one.

For those who missed either the programme or the predictable broomstick that preceded it, this was the story of Kerry, who from the age of 10 was sexually abused by just about every adult she came in contact with. Mother, father, stepfather, care worker, pimp, lorry drivers — it was a long, depressing and quite extraordinary list. Her mother?

Again and again, during a film that ITV quite properly showed at a late hour, that opening statement came back to me. "This was a true story." As a journalist I am trained to think "But it isn't." As someone from a nice, safe, middle-class background, my instincts were "No, it can't possibly be." But it was, it said so at the beginning, so it had to be. Didn't it?

My doubts, you see, never did quite disappear and this I eventually concluded was not entirely my fault. Peter Kosminsky, the producer, had taken us on a journey of depravity that was both beyond belief and beyond the credible boundaries of dramatisation. We needed facts (how common is mother-daughter abuse?), we needed information (are pimps really allowed to stand outside the gates of children's homes?), and above all we needed corroboration. Kosminsky has it — it says so in the press release he sent to journalists. Unfortunately, he did not have where it mattered last night on the screen.

What he did have was a quite outstanding performance from Brooke Kinsella as Kerry. It was the sort of performance that Dustin Hoffman or Daniel Day-Lewis would have been proud of — all eyes, body language and utter concentration. And while it was

easy to warm to Colin Salmon, who played the teacher who finally realised things were wrong, the real praise belongs to the actors who took on the thankless roles of Kerry's mother, father and stepfather: Sharon Small, Bill Geraghty and Geoffrey Church. May the rest of their careers be blessed with heroes and happy endings.

Having opted for dramatisation as the best way of telling the story, Kosminsky employed intelligent restraint in what he did and did not show. While never succumbing to prurience, he made it quite clear what sort of abuse we were dealing with but baring one brief, distressing but justifiable rape scene we never saw any of it. People may not like the story he was telling, but he had done his utmost to ensure they would not be sidetracked into criticising the manner of his telling.

If deciding what was true was the problem with *No Child of*

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

Mine, the difficulty with *Inside Story: To Catch a Cheat* (BBC1) was working out which side to cheer for.

As someone in the privileged position of paying income tax and National Insurance (it's all confessions today, isn't it?) I should have been supporting the benefit fraud investigators as they bravely battled to claw back some of the £3 billion a year paid to fraudulent

claimants. But it was awfully difficult.

What Ian Sturges' film exposed was the mundane reality behind the headlines of the Government's *Benefit Fraud Hotline*. It may get 1,000 calls a day, thanks to an unusual way of accounting, be able to point to impressive savings in payments, but it has also — because of the requirement to investigate every call — become a charter for those conducting personal vendettas.

"You're the sixth I've had this year," said a weary-sounding woman as yet another investigator asked her how many nights a week her boyfriend stayed at the flat. "I wish you people would just watch," she complained. That remark, an option, replied her stony-faced inquisitor.

Three quarters of calls to the hotline allege two basic sorts of fraud: claiming benefit while working and claiming benefit as a

single person when living with someone. The first should be easy to detect but isn't. "The strange thing is, if all these people are unemployed, why are none of them at home during the day?" complained another investigator.

As for the second, it appeared to be an enforcement nightmare (how many nights a week does your boyfriend stay, on average?), suggesting that the problem lies as much with the claimants as it does with the claimants.

But for all the insights the film offered, it never quite engaged in the way that this style of "people at work" documentary normally does. We got to know the faces of some of those involved but never their characters. As for the drama, well, there wasn't any. Every now and then a caption would flash up "eight people were duly signed off benefit" or "the next day the

claimant stopped claiming as a single person". I know, I should have cheered... I stifled a yawn.

Given the absolute avalanche of pre-publicity, it hardly seemed watching *Benefit Fraud: Love Story* (BBC2), "Naz-Jewish-lesbian love romp," screamed the newspapers, unable to contain their good fortune at getting such emotive words into one headline. Carolee Clays, the however, adopted a thoughtful approach, charmingly retelling the story of the illicit love affair between Lily Wurst, a Nazi medical-willing mother of four, and Felice Schragenheim, a young Jewish woman destined to die in Belsen.

Wurst is still alive and, together with "underground Jews" who somehow managed to survive in Berlin, provided a vivid and moving account of a love that definitely dared not speak its name. Not, at least, if its name was Schragenheim.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (46959)

7.00 BBC Breakfast News (7) (50881)

9.00 Breakfast News Extra (7) (8391591)

9.20 Style Challenge (1021930)

9.45 Kilroy (639794)

10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (83607)

11.00 News (7), regional news and weather (637297)

11.05 The Really Useful Show (578356)

11.35 Change That (5857775)

12.00 News (7) (6974423)

12.05pm The Alphabet Game (5550591)

12.30 Going for a Song (7841826)

12.55 The Weather Show (34958572)

1.00 News (7) and weather (60268)

1.30 Regional News (6882355)

1.40 Neighbours (7) (20451048)

2.05 Police Rescue (6736626)

2.50 As Time Goes By (7) (5370152)

3.20 Well Worth a Visit: Matthew Collins takes a trip to The Old Operating Theatre Museum, built in 1821, where the last amputations without anaesthetics took place (333298)

3.30 Playdays (1260338) 3.50 ChuckleVision (1240572) 4.10 Popeye and Son (3557510) 4.25 The Wild House (6858404) 5.00 Newsround (7) (7715572) 5.10 Blue Peter (7) (1005468)

5.35 Neighbours (7) (561171)

6.00 News (7) and weather (897)

6.30 Newsroom South East (249)

7.00 Noel's Telly Years: Dáns Quilly, the actor, the comedian, Brian O'Byrne and Ben Bova, drummer of the Move, answer questions about events in 1970 (1084)

7.30 Tomorrow's World: Special edition from Kenya, where farmers have finally outwitted the marauding elephant, baboons have been successfully immunised against pregnancy with a reversible vaccine, and a remarkable woman has saved the country's tourism crop from oblivion. With Shaznay Palmer and Craig Doyle (7) (133)

8.00 The National Lottery Live (214341)

8.15 25 Years of the Two Ronnies (833442)

8.30 Points of View (22630)

9.00 News (7) and weather (8591)

9.20 National Lottery Update (488336)

9.30 Traskers Drama, with Julia Ford and Ken Christensen. A young drifter arrives at Venermore with his sights set firmly on Annie Whitby (434713)

10.25 Sportsnight: Desmond Lynam introduces highlights of tonight's FA Cup fifth-round replays. Plus, Nigel Stanger-Smith looks forward to Saturday's five national rugby union matches — Scotland v Ireland and England v France (183249)

11.55 The Marmalade Effect: The role made famous by Yul Brynner in this western adventure, as he leads the gunsmuggling heroes in another quest — this time to rescue his wife, who has been kidnapped by bandits running riot in a Mexican town. Directed by George McCowan (7) (881152)

1.30am Weather (2765737)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes

The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCodes, numbers, which allow you to find out more about a programme with a VideoPlus+ handset. Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ (V), PlusCode (P) and Video Programme (V) are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

BBC2

6.00am Open University: Living with Technology (7372978) 6.50 The Last of the Libbers (1894830) 7.15 News (7) (8328335) 7.30 Captain Cavenham and the Teen Angels (1227830) 7.55 Record Breakers: Gold (7) (7821775) 8.20 Teddy Trucks (6576888) 8.25 Spot (7) (1104775) 8.35 The Record (9737607) 8.40 News (7) (639794) 9.25 See You See Me (8318268) 9.30 Words and Pictures (3677591) 10.00 Playdays (14591) 10.30 Numberline (4347369) 10.45 Cats' Eyes (892274) 11.00 Around Scotland (2941201) 11.20 Music Makers (7222045) 11.40 Science in Action (1229404) 12.00 Spanish Globe (8672063) 12.05pm Working Lunch (35171) 1.00 The Geography Programme (15577423) 1.20 Thunderbirds in French (98151249) 1.25 Zig Zag (15556830) 1.45 Come Outside (6858404) 2.00 Teddy Trucks (7) (20451048) 2.10 Everyone's Got One (974572) 3.00 News (7) (857958) 3.05 Westminster 3.55 News (7) 4.00 Today's the Day (882) 4.30 Ready, Steady, Cook (886) 5.00 Esther (8862) 5.30 The Village (560442)

5.55 Turning Points (7) (282888)

6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation (7) (7) (306978)

6.45 Trev and Simon's Transmission Impossible (985423)

7.00 Hancock (7) (7) (8626)

7.30 Counterblast: A woman who runs a sanctuary for unwanted animals argues that keeping pets is demeaning and should be abolished (7) (775)

8.00 University Challenge: Queen's University, Belfast, take on Giron College, Cambridge (7) (5046)

8.30 Changing Rooms (7) (7881)

9.00 Modern Times: The first of a new 12-part series looks at the journey of mangrove from a farm in Zimbabwe to the dinner tables of Britain (7) (412065)

9.50 A Woman Called Smith

Elizabeth Smith talks about her role in the House of Lords (7) (364317)

10.00 Even Further Abroad with Jonathan Meades: The Times columnist explores the world of caravanners (7) (76530)

10.30 Newsnight (7) (816713)

11.15 This Life (7) (141171)

12.00 The Midnight Hour (7) (83244)

12.30am Learning Zone: The Open University: Home and Away (60805)

1.00 Looking Glass World (76022) 1.30 Samples of Analysis (34261) 2.00 Modern Languages: German (50737) 4.00 English Heritage (18805) 4.30 Unleash in the Classroom (18195) 5.00 Modern Apprenticeships (36485) 5.30 Voluntary Matters (84973)

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CHOICE

